FEDERATION OF BUSINESS DISCIPLINES

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 51ST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE MARKETING EDUCATORS

Galveston, Texas
April 8-13, 2024

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Ayan Ghosh Dastidar
Clark University
Proceedings Editor

Atefeh Yazdanparast
Clark University
Program Chair

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

This year, the 51st ACME Conference Proceedings covered 16 tracks with 72 submissions, extended abstracts, and papers from researchers around the world. The wide variety and diversity in topics and the extended number of tracks was a pleasure to witness.

I would like to thank everyone who actively participated and helped with organizing the 2024 Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators Conference. My sincere appreciation for all the Track Chairs and Reviewers for their thoughtful and constructive critiques on the submissions, while adhering to tight timelines.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to all authors for their timely submissions and adherence to our Proceedings standards.

Last, but not least, I wish to acknowledge the passion, encouragement and continued support of the ACME Program Chair, Atefeh Yazdanparast.

Ayan Ghosh Dastidar

ACME Proceedings Editor, 2023-2024,

Clark University, Massachusetts, USA

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ACME Community,

It is a great pleasure to deliver the report as the President of ACME, 2023-2024. On behalf of the entire ACME officer team, I extend a warm and hearty welcome to each and every one of you. Your presence here, representing different corners of the country, not only enriches our gathering but also embodies the vibrant and collaborative spirit that defines the realm of marketing academia.

First and foremost, I must express my profound gratitude to the ACME officer team and the organizing committee. To Atefeh, Renée, Irfan, Sanjay, Lili Gai, Gina, Zhenning, and Yiming, I extend a heartfelt thank you. Your contributions are invaluable, and your unwavering commitment is truly inspiring.

Reflecting on our achievements from the past year, we can take pride in several notable accomplishments. From successfully organizing a hybrid conference with both online and on-ground sessions, to honoring our first Trailblazer Award winner, Dr. Gerald Zaltman, and launching our inaugural Fall Online Colloquium with remarkable attendance, we have indeed made significant strides. Today, as we gather to continue fostering a sense of community and collaboration at this conference, we are proud to announce that we will be hosting the second Fall online event. Building upon the success of last year's event, with Dr. Fuat Firat as our Trailblazer Award winner and keynote speaker in 2024, we are eager to further expand upon that foundation.

These endeavors epitomize our commitment to innovation and growth within our organization. We firmly believe that by embracing new initiatives like what we have been doing, we can broaden our horizons, connect with more scholars and practitioners, and continue to make meaningful contributions to the field of marketing. Let us continue to support one another in our pursuit of knowledge and innovation.

I trust that you have engaged deeply with the sessions, actively participated in discussions, and made the most of the networking opportunities over the past few days. Together, let us transform this conference into more than just a venue for academic exchange; let it be a platform for innovation, a source of inspiration, and a catalyst for future collaborations.

As we draw this conference to a close, I am filled with optimism for the future. Let us carry forward the insights gained, the connections made, and the inspiration felt during our time together. May we continue to push the boundaries of knowledge, challenge conventional wisdom, and drive positive change in our respective spheres.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your dedication, enthusiasm, and contributions to this conference. I hope the connections we made here will last, and the collaborations sparked at this event will lead to more success in the future. Thank you, and I am looking forward to seeing you in the future ACME Conferences.

Sincerely,

Lilly Ye

Lilly Ye, Ph.D.
President, 2023-2024
Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators
Professor of Marketing
Frostburg State University
Frostburg, Maryland

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM CHAIR

Dear ACME Colleagues,

It has been my absolute honor to serve as the Program Chair for this year's conference.

During the conference, we had the privilege of hearing from some of the brightest minds in marketing, learning about the latest trends, and discussing the future of marketing. We are grateful for all the support from ACME members for making the conference a great success.

Following the tradition of last year's conference, we followed a hybrid model, offering both online and on-ground sessions. This year, we had 4 online and 19 on-ground sessions at the conference, which were all well-attended. More specifically, we had 72 submissions in 16 tracks, with 155 authors from 11 countries representing North America, Asia, Europe, and Africa, making ACME a truly international conference. We had 15 research sessions, one Meet the Editors session, and 5 special sessions and workshops focusing on important topics such as leveraging ChatGPT in marketing and education, rebranding in social media, and cultivating a storytelling mindset, among others.

We are grateful to our esteemed keynote speakers. Our on-ground keynote session featured Dr. A. Fuat Firat, whose insightful speech focused on Redefining Marketing in the Age of Existential Challenges. We also had the honor of hosting two industry speakers, Ms. Maureen Patton and Mr. Craig Boleman whose speech focused on Past, Present, and Future of Marketing the Performing Arts. Our online keynote speaker, Ms. Nicole Deng, focused on the Art of Establishing a Leading Global Podcast and Generating Substantial Income from Side Ventures.

The success of the conference would not have been possible without the support of our esteemed speakers and the efforts of ACME officers and program committee members. Also, we would like to thank the excellent team of track chairs who started their work in summer 2023, and their hard work helped elevate the quality and rigor of the research presented at the conference. To recognize their hard work and support, we hosted an appreciation dinner reception for our past presidents, track chairs, and special guests and speakers.

Special thanks to our 75 reviewers for their valuable insights and suggestions that helped improve each ACME submission. We are also grateful to our session chairs who helped run the conference smoothly. And of course, would like to thank all ACME authors and members for their support. Your participation, passion, and dedication are the reasons that we have a highly engaging and collegial conference.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the award recipients, including the ACME Trailblazer Award Winner, Dr. A. Fuat Firat, the Outstanding Educator Award winner, Dr. Pushkala Raman, the Best Conference Paper award winners, Dr. Swagata Chakraborty and Dr. Wi-Suk Kwon, the ACME Teaching Innovation Competition winner, Dr. Swagata Chakraborty, the Lou E. Pelton Emerging Scholar Award recipient, Dr. Ayan Ghosh Dastidar, and the winners of the Best in Track papers. Congratulations to you for your excellent contributions to marketing discipline!

Finally, I would like to thank you all for a memorable conference. I hope you agree with me that ACME is more than a series of presentation sessions and workshops. It is an opportunity to connect with colleagues, foster new collaborations, and get inspired with new ideas and fresh perspectives. With that in mind, we look forward to seeing you at the 2025 conference!

Sincerely,

Atefeh Yazdanparast, Ph.D.
Program Chair, 2023-2024
Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators
Associate Professor of Marketing
Clark University
Worcester, Massachusetts

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE MARKETING EDUCATORS

2024 ACME TRAILBLAZER AWARD

Dr. A. Fuat Firat, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, TX

2024 FEDERATION OF BUSINESS DISCIPLINES OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD

Pushkala Raman, Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX

2024 FEDERATION OF BUSINESS DISCIPLINES DISTINGUISHED PAPER AWARD

Do I Believe Their CSR Activities? Antecedents of CSR Message Believability and Attitudes Toward CSR Message and the Company

Swagata Chakraborty, University of North Texas, Denton, TX
Wi-Suk Kwon, Auburn University, Auburn, AL

2024 LOU E. PELTON EMERGING SCHOLAR AWARD

Ayan Ghosh Dastidar, Clark University, Worcester, MA

BEST PAPER IN TRACK AWARD WINNERS

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (ESG) AND POLITICAL MARKETING TRACK

Do I Believe Their CSR Activities? Antecedents of CSR Message Believability and Attitudes Toward CSR Message and the Company

Swagata Chakraborty, University of North Texas, Denton, TX
Wi-Suk Kwon, Auburn University, Auburn, AL

MARKETING EDUCATION AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TRACK

Psychological Wellbeing of College Students: Relationship with Holistic Thinking & Cognitive Flexibility

Sarath Nonis, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR
Gail Hudson, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR

MARKETING STRATEGY TRACK

Do Female CEOs Act Responsibly: Analyses of Female CEO Impact on Relational CSR

Prachi Gala, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA
Saim Kashmiri, University of Mississippi, Lafayette, MS
Duncan Nicol, Union University, Jackson, TN

TEACHING INNOVATION COMPETITION FINALISTS

Winner:

Building Chatbots to Enhance Consumer Experience

Swagata Chakraborty, University of North Texas, Denton, TX

Runner up:

The Engaged Online Learner: A Framework and Model for Integration of Content and Students in the Delivery of Two Marketing Courses

Amy Lavin, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Sheri Lambert, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE MARKETING EDUCATORS

Track Chairs

Thank you to the ACME Track Chairs for 2023-2024. ACME greatly appreciates your service!

ADVERTISING AND INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
Mark Case, Florida Gulf Coast University
Md Rokonuzzaman, Clayton State University

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AND BRANDING
Pramod Iyer, Kennesaw State University
Arezoo Davari, Eastern Washington University

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGY
Seth Ketron, University of St. Thomas
Jiani Jiang, Concordia College

GLOBAL MARKETING
Daniel Rajaratnam, University of Texas at Dallas
Sudipto Sarkar, Frostburg State University

LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT
Yolanda Obaze, University of Evansville
Yiming Zhuang, Frostburg State University

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (ESG) AND POLITICAL MARKETING
Julie Haworth, University of Texas at Dallas
Weixing Ford, Texas A&M University-San Antonio

MARKETING EDUCATION AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Adam J. Mills, Loyola University
Katharine Howie, University of Southern Mississippi

MARKETING RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS
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Yang (Jack) Lv, Beijing Technology and Business University

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Aisha Ghimire, University of Mississippi
Luis Matosas López, Rey Juan Carlos University

PERSONAL SELLING AND SALES MANAGEMENT
Tim Butler, Southeastern Louisiana University
Yuewu Li, Nova Southeastern University

RETAILING AND FASHION MARKETING
Sua Jeon, Texas Wesleyan Universityc**Chengyi Le**, East China Jiaotong University

SOCIAL MEDIA, MOBILE MARKETING, AND DIGITAL MARKETING
Scott D. Roberts, University of the Incarnate Word
Sphurti Sewak, Illinois State University

SERVICES MARKETING
Jeff Christensen, Brigham Young University-Hawaii
Jiajia Qu, University of Texas Permian Basin

STUDENT RESEARCH
Shu Xu, Hunan University of Technology and Business
Pushkala Raman, Texas Woman’s University

SPECIAL SESSIONS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS, WORKSHOPS, AND POSTERS
Vaidas Lukosius, Tennessee State University

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE MARKETING EDUCATORS

ACME 2024 Reviewers

ACME thanks each of the following colleagues for their valuable service in reviewing submissions for our 2024 ACME Conference!

Katharine Howie, University of Southern Mississippi

Saqib Bhat, University of Chester

Jud Jenkins, Brigham Young University - Hawaii

Luis Matosas López, Rey Juan Carlos University

Jasmine Parajuli, Southern Arkansas University

Holger Schmidt, University of California - Santa Cruz

Perry Parke, Kennesaw State University

Thi Nguyet Que Nguyen, University of Economics and Law, Vietnam National University

Huwei Wen

Pengyi Shen

Xiaolong Shao, Iowa State University

Margaret Young, Texas Woman's University

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Lilly Ye, Frostburg State University

Aaron Schibik, University of Evansville

Julie Haworth, University of Texas at Dallas

Sarath Nonis, Arkansas State University

Sudipto Sarkar, Frostburg State University

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PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AND BRANDING

BRAND DELETION DECISION FACTORS: A SUNK COST PERSPECTIVE

Arezoo Davari, Eastern Washington University
Pramod Iyer, Kennesaw State University
Md Rokonuzzaman, Clayton State University

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Brands are intangible resources that can have a significant contribution to the firm's performance (M'zungu et al. 2015). Brands have the potential to create superior value and play a key role in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage over rivals (Ponsonby- McCabe and Boyle 2006). Not surprisingly, there has been a strategic orientation towards brand management over the last three decades. This orientation involves all activities from developing and positioning the brand in the market to evaluating the performance of the brand. Brand managers are not only responsible for the short-term performance of the brand, but also for the development of long-term brand value (Santos-Vijande et al. 2013).

In strategic brand management process, firms invest financial and non-financial resources in their brand marketing activities. There are some hidden costs in these investments (i.e., the diseconomies of scale) that are occasionally ignored by brand managers and are more critical in a house-of-brand strategy. In fact, scholars have discussed several disadvantages of a house of brands strategy, such as lower manufacturing and distribution economies (e.g., Laforet and Saunders 1999), inefficiency in resource allocation that causes higher costs (e.g., Kotler 1965), and weaker brand loyalty among consumers and higher price competition among rivals (e.g., Bawa et al. 1989). In sum, lower value of the firm's brands (e.g., Morrin 1999). Consequently, firms earn a considerable amount of their profits from a small number of their brands (Kumar 2003, Varadarajan et al. 2006), while breaking-even, or sometimes losing money on most of their brands. To avoid such situations, brand managers need to routinely evaluate their brands in the portfolio to make sure they are not redundant and provide sufficient returns (Aaker 2004). By identifying and deleting not just loss-making but also the declining, weak, and marginally profitable brands from their portfolios, organizations can focus on their stronger brands to gain competitive advantage in the market (Kumar 2003).

The current study applies sunk cost perspective and resource-based perspective in the context of brand deletion decision making process to identify the primary organizational factors (brand and managerial) that drive the brand deletion strategy in a company. Specifically, this study considers brand contribution and brand fit to represent the brand level factors, and managerial commitment to brands, investment in brands, anticipated regret, and attitude towards deletion to represent the managerial factors (Varadajaran et al. 2006). We also consider top management support for branding as an internal environmental factor.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the overlooked area of strategic brand management; brand deletion decision-making (Shah 2015). Deleting brands from the portfolio of an organization is “the most sensitive issue in strategic brand portfolio management” (Aaker 2004, p.90). As discussed, the brand deletion decision-making process is a complex and nebulous process, and surprisingly has not been examined in detail, even conceptually (Kumar 2003; Shah 2015; Varadarajan et al. 2006). This study provides insights into the understanding of brand and managerial level antecedents to a brand-deletion decision, as well as the empirical examination of these factors. Current study extends the application of RBT and sunk cost investment in the context of de-emphasizing the allocation of resources.

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BOTTLING COCA-COLA: JOSEPH BIEDENHARN'S MARKETING INNOVATION

Jun Yu, University of Louisiana Monroe
Joyce Zhou, University of Louisiana Monroe

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the factors that led an entrepreneur to introduce a marketing innovation that changed the landscape of an entire industry. We use the concept of opportunity recognition from the entrepreneurship literature (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Shane, 2003) to examine the ideation process of new products or services. To that end, we study a historical case of a remarkable marketing innovation in the packaging and distribution of a widely available popular product – Coca-Cola, namely, the beginning of bottling this popular soft drink. This innovation would prove to have significant implications on the success of Coca-Cola because it enabled convenient accessibility to this product by consumers. Prior to this innovation, consumers could only purchase coke in fountains located in stores.

This research adopts the historical research method (Savitt, 1980; Golder, 2000). We use archival materials at the Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum located in Monroe, Louisiana and published books and business reports on the history of Coca Cola to trace historical events surrounding Biedenharn's initiative to bottle Coca Cola. The historical facts are analyzed with Baron's (2006) theory of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition through pattern detection. Based on research in human cognition, Baron proposes that entrepreneurs identify new opportunities by using cognitive frameworks they have acquired through experiences to perceive connections between seemingly unrelated events or trends in the external world. In Joseph Biedenharn's childhood hometown of Vicksburg, Mississippi, his father and uncle had a confectionery store. In 1888, at the age of 22, he took over the management of the store after his uncle passed away. He soon added a soda fountain, a bakery, and a grocery business. The soda fountain drinks were carbonated water flavored with a variety of syrups. These historical facts indicate that Biedenharn possessed a great deal of knowledge of the soft drink industry. As indicated earlier, this is one of the three factors in Baron's framework. A fortuitous incident in late June, 1891 proved to be an important step in his business growth. Three customers gave him orders for a July 4th picnic that they planned for their plantation workers. Each order included 10 cases of soda water. Biedenharn took this routine order, anticipating no problems. He called the local bottling company but found they could not fill his order due to heavy demands of the holiday business. Without an immediate alternative, Biedenharn gave each of the three valued customers a box of lemons, a sack of sugar, and some coloring so they could have pink lemonade instead of bottled soda water. He was extremely irritated by this incident that he decided to get into the soda water bottling business

himself. Within 30 days, he purchased second-hand equipment and started bottling lemon and strawberry soda water.

Prior knowledge about the market and the soft drink industry, being alert and actively searching for opportunities would prove to be critical to one of the great innovations for Coca-Cola and the entire soft drink industry. Biedenharn noticed on hot summer days, people would come to the various fountains in the city to buy coke. He came to the belief that country people would also like the drink if they had access to it. Then he asked himself this question: why not bottle Coca-Cola so that both people in Vicksburg and those who live far away from the city could easily buy it? Doing this, to him, was both easy and inexpensive. He had already bottled soda water; he had the bottling equipment, the gas, the bottles, and the crates; he also had the Coca-Cola syrup. So, in the summer of 1894, Joseph Biedenharn became the first person to bottle coke. Later, many around the world would follow in his footsteps. His innovation was an important step in popularizing one of the most successful products in the world.

The three factors in the pattern recognition model – prior knowledge of the market and industry, being alert, and active search for opportunities led to perceived connection among seemingly unrelated trends, phenomena, or events in this case. These trends, phenomena, or events include consumers' need for refreshing drinks in hot southern summers, consumers' favorable attitude toward coke as shown in its sales through store fountains, the large population of people living away from the city, and the bottling equipment and materials in possession of Biedenharn. The dots were connected, but only so because Biedenharn had the knowledge and experience in the industry. This also explains why certain marketing innovations could be created by some people, but not others, as unique market knowledge and industry experiences make such pattern recognition possible.

This closer look into the process of pattern recognition indicates that it actually involves multiple steps. First, the trends, phenomena, and events have to be first identified. Then, potential links among the trends, phenomena, and events are perceived by the marketer. Finally, ideas for possible solutions – new products or services – are created. In each of these steps, prior knowledge about market and industry knowledge, alertness, and active search for opportunities have to be present.

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CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGY

THE FREE-RANGE CONSUMER: DEFINITION, FRAMEWORK, AND MEASURE DEVELOPMENT

Gregory S. Black, Metropolitan State University of Denver

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research employs unique methodology to develop a measure to identify the propensity of a person to be a free-range consumer. The technique used is hinted at in social science and marketing literature, but has never been used to date. It employs measures developed to assess related component constructs, rather than starting from scratch to produce scale items that would inevitably be very similar to items that have already been developed and validated. The resulting measurement development described in this research determines that being a free-range consumer is multi-dimensional. Employing a sample of 258 consumers and utilizing accepted scale development procedures, a 19-item scale to measure four distinct dimensions of free-range consumers is developed. A simpler measure that attempts to confine this new concept into a single factor would likely miss important portions of the free-range consumer.

The items included in the scale are derived from the measurements developed to measure five constructs in previous consumer behavior literature. These constructs include consumer alienation, decision making, impulse buying, risk attraction, and venturesomeness. Utilizing reliability and exploratory factor analyses to examine an original 24 items, scale reduction results in 19 items that measure four distinct dimensions of free-range consumers. These four dimensions include risk taking/adventurousness, alienation, emotional decision making, and impulsivity.

Free-range consumption may be a growing trend as companies continue to disappoint consumers. A recent example is the failure of Federal Express to honor its guarantee of timely delivery in a shipment of fresh fish from Alaska. The fish shipment was ruined, costing the parties involves hundreds of dollars, and Federal Express refused to honor its guarantee of overnight delivery, stating COVID as an excuse. Free-range parenting, which may be seen as a subset of being a free-range consumer, seems to be gaining popularity as parents become busier to try to make ends meet. They may also be realizing the need to make their children more independent thinkers as more attempts are made through social media and education systems to indoctrinate them into certain ways of thinking. If consumer product companies are able to recognize this trend and develop specific marketing strategies for these free-range consumers, they will gain an advantage as these consumers are not loyal to any brand or company.

Thus, another objective of this research is to develop a unique definition of free-ranger consumers. These five well-researched consumer variables discussed all provide essential elements of a description of free-range consumers. These five variables include consumer alienation, decision making, impulse buying, risk attraction, and venturesomeness. It is also important to recall the original USDA definition of agricultural free-range and how literature describes a free-range parent. Thus, free-range consumers are those who experience a sense of freedom from societal norms and cognitive processes, and who take risks and reduce personal responsibility and connection to large enterprises, such as government and business organizations.

SIMPLE LIVING HIGH THINKING: THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY AND EMPATHY IN INFLUENCING MINDFUL CONSUMPTION AND SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING

Swagata Chakraborty, University of North Texas
Veena Chattaraman, Auburn University

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In the recent years, there has been an increased focus on spirituality, spiritual practices, and their influences on human behavior and subjective well-being. Recent statistics show that spiritual practices such as yoga and meditation have become a popular lifestyle choices among adult Americans (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018; Forbes, 2018). Instances of meditation practices grew more than three times from 4.1% in 2012 to 14.2 in 2017 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Some of the key reasons cited for practicing yoga and meditation include improving mental and physical health to enrich overall well-being (CNN, 2018). Collectively, these trends indicate that American adults are engaged in enhancing their spirituality in the pursuit of improved well-being. While the U.S. predominantly functions as a capitalist society favoring consumerism, it would be worthwhile to investigate the role of growing spirituality among adult Americans in influencing mindful consumption (i.e., a responsible way of consuming products by carefully evaluating the need for the products and the potential impacts of the products on the environment or the society).

Conducting an online survey with a sample of U.S. consumers (n = 305) and analyzing the data through structural equation modeling, we found that spirituality positively influenced social and environmental empathy and subjective well-being. Social empathy encouraged mindful consumption, which enhanced subjective well-being. Additionally, mindful consumption mediated the relationship between social empathy and subjective well-being. Although environmental empathy did not influence mindful consumption significantly, it indirectly and positively influenced subjective well-being via mindful consumption. Therefore, marketers should explore aspects of consumers' spirituality in encouraging mindful consumption and contributing to their subjective well-being by increasing the salience of social and environmental empathy.

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BACKGROUND VISUAL COMPLEXITY WITH UTILITARIAN AND HEDONIC PRODUCTS: THE ROLE OF AROUSAL

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Visual stimuli can vary in various ways, including the number and dissimilarity of objects or visual details, an influential characteristic termed visual complexity (Orth & Wirtz, 2014; Pieters et al., 2010). Visually complex designs include many visual elements, which may also be loosely or haphazardly arranged. These can include differences in textures, colors, and the regularity or grouping possibilities among those details. In contrast, visually simple designs contain fewer visual elements and more similarities among objects within the visual field.

Visually complex stimuli surrounding a product, such as other objects around the product or the background behind the product, can affect consumer responses, including attention (Ketron, 2018; Tong et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020). However, prior studies on visually complex backgrounds have yet to address the role of different types of products. To address this gap, we aim to show that background visual complexity may not yield itself to a "one approach fits all" strategy, where simplicity is universally preferable. Instead, background visual complexity may increase the consumer's desire for a product in certain situations, which can increase downstream responses (i.e., purchasing).

For example, prior research shows visual complexity increases arousal (Ketron, 2018). Because visual complexity is more arousing, we propose that background visual complexity (i.e., what is displayed behind the product) piques arousal and increases consumers' processing load (Tong et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020). The arousal from visual complexity may lead to more positive responses toward hedonic products but more negative responses toward utilitarian products (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006). Because arousal interferes with the ability to consider products from a more rational frame of mind, the piqued arousal of background visual complexity should create an incongruity between the visual characteristics of the display and the cognitive nature of utilitarian products.

Meanwhile, consumers' more naturally affective approach to hedonic products would align with the heightened arousal of a display with higher background visual complexity. In the presence of background visual complexity, cognitive resources are occupied with processing that complexity, freeing the affective side to focus on the displayed hedonic products. If true, this would mean the consumer should respond more positively to hedonic products in a display with higher (vs. lower) background visual complexity. Formally:

H1: Purchase intentions toward utilitarian (hedonic) products will be more positive in the presence of background visual simplicity (complexity).

H2: Arousal mediates the effect of visual complexity on purchase intentions.

Four studies were conducted. First, a pretest with a sample from Prolific (N = 50) measured a variety of product categories on their utilitarian (1) vs. hedonic (7) natures using a single semantic-differential item. The results revealed that wine (M = 6.2, SD = 1.4) and candles (M = 5.4, SD = 1.3) were more hedonic, whereas dish soap (M = 2.1, SD = 1.7) and mugs (M = 2.6, SD = 1.7) were more utilitarian. With these categories, three experimental studies assessed H1 and H2. Study 1 (N = 205) tested H1 using visually similar representations of a utilitarian and a hedonic product (mugs vs. candles, respectively). In contrast, Studies 2a (N = 110) and 2b (N = 115) tested both hypotheses using dish soap and wine as additional utilitarian and hedonic categories.

Study 1 supported H1, finding that purchase intentions toward a utilitarian product (mugs) were higher with a simpler background. In contrast, with a more complex background, purchase intentions were higher toward a hedonic product (candles). Studies 2a and 2b replicate the findings of Study 1, confirming that purchase intentions toward utilitarian (hedonic) products are higher when background visual complexity is lower (higher). Further, arousal mediates the effects, confirming that visual complexity drives arousal, which increases inclination toward hedonic products but detracts from preferences for utilitarian products.

The findings of this research contribute to the literature on background visual complexity and demonstrate the role of product type (utilitarian vs. hedonic) on downstream consumer responses (i.e., purchase intentions). Additionally, this research contributes to the literature on the differences between utilitarian and hedonic products and the literature on the effects of background in retail settings. Overall, the results above suggest that marketers should consider visual complexity as a potentially helpful element of retail design depending on product-related and/or other factors that future research should explore.

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CRAFTING COMPELLING SUPPLIER DIVERSITY STATEMENTS THROUGH COMPANY GENUINENESS AND CREDIBILITY: A CSR AND SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has progressively increased in importance as a major differentiator in consumers' minds (Carrington & Neville, 2015; Laskin & Kresic, 2021). As societal expectations have changed, CSR has evolved to increasingly integrate the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) (Laskin & Kresic, 2021). The increased public support for CSR issues has coincided with an increase in consumers-as-stakeholders salience due to the rise of the internet (Coombs, 1998). In response, many corporations now explicitly signal their DEI philosophy and activities on their corporate websites in the form of diversity statements. More than just window-dressing, diversity statements have been shown to positively influence stakeholder perceptions about a corporation. Therefore, they have become critical components of their CSR and communications strategy.

Despite the increasingly ubiquitous presence of supplier diversity statements on US corporations' websites, little is known about their actual impact on consumer perceptions. To our knowledge, there is no peer-reviewed study that empirically examines the potential impact of supplier diversity statements on consumer perceptions. To address this research gap, our paper combines CSR and social judgment theories to examine the effect of consumer goods retailers' supplier diversity statements on consumer perceptions. We specifically examine the following hypotheses:

H$_1$: When considering a supplier diversity statement, patronage intentions toward a company will be higher when the company includes a social (vs. profit or no) motive for commitment to supplier diversity.
H$_2$: When considering a supplier diversity statement, patronage intentions toward a company will be higher when the company includes (vs. does not include) evidence of a high financial investment in supplier diversity.
H$_3$: The effects of a) motive and b) financial investment on patronage intentions will be sequentially mediated by company genuineness and company credibility.

With a 2 X 3 between-subjects experiment, we demonstrate that showing consumers a supplier diversity statement leads to higher patronage intentions when that statement signals a corporation's CSR commitment by 1) providing a concrete dollar figure for investment (vs. no dollar figure) and/or 2) emphasizing a social (vs. profit-focused) motive for doing so. These effects are explained by increased company genuineness, which increases company source credibility. The results offer

implications for social judgment theory as well as for practitioners in the field regarding how to fashion compelling supplier diversity statements. Additionally, more than just words, evidence of financial investment in supplier diversity has a significant positive impact on consumer perceptions. Because firms may have to actually do more than just change the wording of their supplier diversity statement in light of this revelation the contribution and implications of this study extend beyond just semantics and into supply chain management and strategy.

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THE APPLICATION OF GANS IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This manuscript examines the revolutionary role of Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) in transforming consumer behavior within the marketing domain. GANs, a subset of artificial intelligence, have significantly enhanced the predictive accuracy of marketing strategies, thereby increasing businesses' confidence in these technologies for market share expansion. By generating data nearly indistinguishable from real datasets, GANs can benefits businesses in various sectors, including fashion, where they contribute to creativity, product development, and personalized consumer engagement.

One of the applications of GANs is in image generation, where they have been utilized to create and modify fashion images, thus enabling more personalized and innovative design opportunities. Such applications not only foster co-creation between companies and consumers but also enhance the novelty and appeal of products, potentially boosting purchase intent. GANs also play a crucial role in improving the quality of low-light images, thus enriching the consumer experience with more personalized designs.

With regards to video enhancement, GANs have been instrumental in elevating the quality of low-resolution videos, thus enhancing the visual appeal of marketing campaigns. By improving visual quality and removing distortions, GANs contribute to more engaging and professional promotional materials that capture greater consumer attention. Additionally, GANs facilitate the creation of content that stands out in a competitive market by allowing for the introduction of captivating effects and immersive video experiences. In the same vein, consumer customization has emerged as another significant area where GANs can influence. Through personalized product recommendations and custom product designs, GANs address individual consumer preferences, thus providing tailored marketing solutions. This personalization extends to video content, exemplifying the potential for tailored promotional experiences that resonate with individual customers' tastes and preferences.

Looking to the future, the manuscript anticipates further advancements in GAN applications within consumer behavior. Potential areas of development include hyper-personalized recommendations, customization beyond products, virtual try-ons, consumer-generated content enhancement, and behavioral prediction. These advancements promise even more personalized experiences, predictive insights, and innovative marketing strategies. However, as GANs become more embedded in marketing and consumer engagement, ethical considerations and data privacy concerns rise to the forefront. The manuscript also explains the importance of balancing personalization with respect for individual privacy and autonomy, highlighting the need for responsible and ethical use of technology in marketing.

In conclusion, GANs hold immense potential in reshaping consumer behavior and marketing strategies. They offer a pathway to highly personalized experiences, innovative product development, and enhanced consumer engagement. Nevertheless, the ethical use of GANs and the protection of consumer privacy remain critical considerations for businesses and policymakers alike, as they navigate the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence in marketing.

DONOR COMMUNICATIONS MATTER

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ABSTRACT

Relationships matter for all humans. The ability to effectively relate and communicate with others has major benefits. In the nonprofit sector of industry, they value relationships, especially as they are accepting tax deductible gifts to keep their organization in operation. One of the challenges in every nonprofit entity is how to spread their dollars enough so they can attract future donors and donations. This study seeks to understand if communication styles have an impact on donation size in generation X & Y cohorts of donors. This paper will explore some social and psychological motivators in communicating through specific touchpoints. This study will share some common donor motivators that have been found in the U.S.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding a donor and their communication preferences is something that nonprofits have a need for because they want to be seen in the best light for future donations. To identify how best to communicate with a donor is critical to their success, however a nonprofit also must take into consideration that all donors may not have the same communication style. Cultivating a generational communication style in solicitations for gifts will prove to be useful. This study will identify generational communication differences between generation X, those born between 1965-1980 and generation Y, born between 1980-2000.

It has been long suspected that donors give based solely on the needs of the organization as it appealed to their emotions, however it is not solely this one reason. Donors give for many reasons to non- profits. Donors also give because it appeals to their self-interest. According to the the self-discrepancy theory, there are three: actual self, ideal self, and ought self. (Morettti, 1990). The actual self is one who a person really believes they are. The ideal self is one who aims to be the best they can be because it is what they think they need to be according to a social standard. The ought self is what one thinks others expect them to be or want them to be. Based on these three self-beliefs, one can agree that every donor has these characteristics and would like to appeal to one of those identities through their gift giving. A non-profit, if taking these characteristics into account, can strategically design their fund-raising initiatives to appeal to the better self-image of their donors.

Donors are unique as individuals as they are also unique in the generation, they were born in. There will be similar values and beliefs based on their era of growth and exposure to events such as economic recessions, military wars, famines, natural disasters, and pandemics like COVID.

Although the University of York, a higher education institution, is in England, their fundraising is like all higher education institutions. Every nonprofit higher education institution during the pandemic was faced with the same dilemma of how does a university advancement team pivot their messaging and giving initiatives when they cannot meet in person? This institution surveyed their top 30 donors by asking questions and sent a digital survey to random-aged donors in their database about their fund- raising campaigns. They realized that if they were to move forward with confidence, then they needed to know that they were saying the right things to their wider network of supporters. They asked their donor community how they should communicate with them and engage them in their campaign activity (Haworth, 2021). From this survey they determined that a segmented digital communication plan was in order so that each of their donors felt engaged, would garner a higher participation rate, and would reinforce the significance of the fund-raising campaign during this COVID period. Tailoring communication is essential if an organization wants to stay relevant.

Haworth's segmentation of communication was based on a survey of those affected by COVID, however those donors were those who had the capacity to give during that time, meaning they were more than likely an older person and from generation X. Communication with donors needs to be tailored, segmented, and thoughtful if a nonprofit wants to increase donations in the upcoming years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fundraising is particularly important to nonprofits; it is the life blood, and it is big business! It is also a delicate art form of knowing how to manage relationships with individual donors, families, foundations, corporations, and bequests. Managing those relationships with a branding set of eyeglasses will not only help a nonprofit with its communications to the donors, but it will help with the public perception of that said organization.

The total number of contributions given in 2022 was 319B, half of the donations received were given by individuals compared to 200B in 2000 (GivingUSA, 2022). With extra dollars being ever scarcer in recent years, it is getting harder to secure major gifts (10k+). First impressions matter greatly when connecting with a potential donor. Understanding how to communicate with a donor better would benefit the relationship since it could lead to consecutive year donations.

Nonprofits must earn a donor's confidence for a gift, as well as earn their trust to start the relationship off on the right foot. Most nonprofits identify prospects through database research on alumni, previous relationships, and personal affinities. Once identified, communication plans are set with fundraisers for follow up. In theory this sounds easy, however, to reach a donor the first time, it may take up to 18-20 touchpoints by a fundraiser (Nonprofitsource, 2023). Touchpoints are described as digital advertising, electronic media, social media, in person events, meetings, discussions, public relations, telephone calls, print, media, digital marketing, emails and texting.

My research shows touchpoints are a cultivation tool for building a relationship with donor prospects. Once initial contact is made, then that is when the magic can happen. Fundraising is not for the faint heart. It is a lot of arduous work to secure a first meeting. Nonprofits are always looking for qualified fundraisers because of the high employment turnover. For fundraisers, the most sought-after characteristics identified by (Shaker, 2022) with the HEXACO personality theory show that technical virtuoso, even handed representation, dedicated collaboration, altruistic supporter, sociable communicator and being an honorable citizen are what major donors see as favorable.

Research has shown that there are also separate motives for giving, including trust (seeing charities properly use donations for the public good), altruism (concern or compassion for those less fortunate), social benefits (nonmonetary benefit, being part of a social network), tax benefits (monetary private benefit), and egoism (enhance reputation, experience good feelings about oneself). Financial constraints can negatively motivate charitable giving (Rolland, 2019).

Research also shows that the proactive approach in updating donor-related work of nonprofit enhances the confidence level of donors and motivates them to maintain long-term relationships with the nonprofit (Kumar, 2021).

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

While donations can come from corporations, foundations, individuals, or other types of stakeholders, individual donors account for 70% of charitable donations in 2018 and 63% in 2022 (Giving USA, 2017) making individuals donors one of the most important donor groups for non-profit organizations. (Donaldson, 2020).

In four short years, the United States has seen a significant decrease in giving from individuals. Dropping 5.1% from 2018 to 2022. Education took a 16% hit during those four years; further evidence that if higher education institutions do not change their message and communications with potential donors, they will not have the same growth as in previous years. (Giving USA, 2022). Appealing to individual donors is crucial for future growth. Not only do higher education institutions have to contend with a shrinking donor base, but they are also facing environmental, social, ethical, and public perception that influence donor behavior.

I contend that donors are consumers, and that the consumer choice theory is what many believe to be the best framework for marketing predictability. Consumers buy products and consume them based on personal preferences. Understanding these preferences as a researcher can be extremely complicated when trying to predict buying habits and formulating buying forecasts. Unlike food items, donor gifts are given voluntarily, and they are not based on the donor's survival need. "Specifically, Atlman (2016) found that "individuals are willing to make material sacrifices in regard to organizations that have certain preferred or desires characteristics" (Donaldson, 2020). In the higher education realm, predicting donor preferences with a college, program, or giving initiative can be even more complicated.

"Traditionally, it was understood that consumers evaluated utility solely based on the good itself. Unlike this traditional understanding of consumer behavior, Lancaster (1966) sought to demonstrate that it is the characteristics of goods that determine the utility to consumers, and the good. Also, Lancaster (1966) proffered that when goods are viewed together, their totality may be different than when those goods are viewed separately. By adhering to this multi-attribute view of consumer selection, theorists are able to incorporate intrinsic characteristics into the evaluation of consumer choice (Lancaster, 1966). Thereby consumer selection is considered not just in terms of what the consumer selected, but the characteristics of the good that led to their decision. “(Donaldson, 2020).

This leads us to the theory of generational stratification as proposed for brand marketing communication strategies, originally conceptualized in 2011 for the labor market managerial scope (Soulez, 2011). “The generational approach is becoming widely used to revise patterns in brand value building and management. The need for such revision is a logical consequence of the current situation, where traditional branding principles fail. As turbulent changes are occurring in the macro environment due to the (post)pandemic situation and global socio-economic development, more and more voices are beginning to point out the different natures of the problem. One solution is the application of the generational approach to the practice of brand managers” (Majerova, 2022).

“In marketing, the generational approach has begun to be a widely used reasoning for observing exceptions from managerial and economic concepts that were so far generally perceived as valid (Signore et al., 2021). Recently, it has also been discussed in the scope of the market consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic – not only from the point of view of the creation of a new generation influenced by the relevant socio-economic crisis and subsequent significant changes (Schramm et al., in press), but also as a phenomenon creating the need to revise the previously formulated theoretical background of the concept of generational stratification and its implementation in managerial practice (Leko Šimić & Pap, 2021; Balinska & Jaska, 2022).

This fact is changing the position of the concept of generational stratification in the theoretical platform of the creation of managerial patterns (Nica et al., 2022; Birtus & Lazaroiu, 2022) ... Moreover, generational stratification rises in importance not only in general terms, but also in relation to its marketing implications (Nguyen et al., 2022). One such dimension of the applicability of the concept of generational stratification is branding.” (Majerova, 2022).

GENERATION X

Generation X refers to those individuals born from 1965 to 1980, being one of the most highly educated generations characterized by their skepticism, pragmatism, and an attitude of risk avoidance (Gurau, 2012, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019). This generation was not brought up with the internet and digital technologies and learned to use it as adults (Prensky, 2001, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019). Generation X easily assimilated technology into their daily life, using personal computers at school and growing up as the internet developed (Hill, 2017, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019). This generation will use technology some, however they are not reliant upon it for all their communications.

Other research of generation X shows that they are like the previous generation in that they perceived respect as maintaining eye contact, paying attention, and being polite, whereas interrupting a speaker, gossiping, not paying attention, rolling one’s eyes when disagreeing with a speaker, and not responding to telephone calls and email messages were described as disrespectful. (Kupperschmidt, 2006) These are not necessarily the same for generation Y. This generation values personal goals over work goals they also have influence over older and younger generations so communicating with them is not for one, it is for multiple generations.

GENERATION Y

Millennials make up 1/3 of the US population and are the largest generational cohort on record (Milliron, 2008, as cited Gorczyca, 2017). They are technologically literate and savvy, as they have grown up and have been immersed in technology all their lives, being in constant contact with digital media, technologies, and the internet (Howe and Strauss, 2003, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019). In addition, they are the first high-tech generation and consequently, they could be named as “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001, Palfrey and Gasser, 2013, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019). Technology has influenced millennials’ behavior, way of thinking and learning process, being different from previous generations (Prensky, 2001, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019) as they perceive information and communication technologies in a more positive way compared to older individuals (Howe and Strauss, 2003, as cited Calvo-Porral, 2019).

This generation was raised enmeshed in digital technology with computer games at nursery school. They were raised in the ‘Era of the Child’ when it was popular to be busy, protected children chauffeured by Soccer Moms. Many have adopted the philosophy of moral relativism and consider truth as relative. (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Tapscott, 1998, as cited Kupperschmidt, 2006). This generation is more about self-identity which makes it a bit more difficult to categorize them.

Generation Y first learn about their top charities through mainstream media, word of mouth, school, and peer to peer events. They donate through a variety of channels online, in person, through texting, and by check (Kumar, 2021). This generation also pursues purposeful work over salary (Derville Gallicano et al. 2012, as cited Gorczyca, 2017).

Hypothesis

Hypothesis (H1)

The positive relationship between face to face (F2F) and a donor’s gift amount will be higher for Gen X donors vs. Gen Y donors.

Hypothesis (H2)

The positive relationship between personal phone calls (PC) and a donor’s gift amount will be higher for Gen X donors vs. Gen Y donors.

Hypothesis (H3)

The relationship between texting (T) and a donor’s gift amount will be less for Gen X donors vs. Gen Y donors.

Hypothesis (H4)

The relationship between emails (EM) and a donor’s gift amount will be less for Gen X donors vs. Gen Y donors.

Hypothesis (H5)

The positive relationship between postal mail (PM) and a donor's gift amount will be more for Gen X vs. Gen Y donors.

METHOD

I plan to use data obtained through a qualitative research method by examining historical giving patterns in higher education and how they relate to a higher raised dollar amount based on a donor's type of preferred communication. I propose the following breakdown of data: (1) Ages (A) Born 1965-1980, (B) Born 1980-2000 (2) West Coast, Central US, and East Coast schools with over 20,000 students; (3) Data Source: from experts in their respective fields, data from a national philanthropic firm and from interviewing higher education donors in three different age segments at three different institutions all located in the United States; (4) Time constraints of interviewees or Wi-Fi issues may be a contributing challenge.

I plan to use the basic empirical framework is qualitative research method of ethnography of business communication, while using micro ethnography in university advancement divisions to gather data through observation, survey participation, and interviewing. I also plan to use Nvivo software to assist in analyzing and interpretation of the raw interview data.

RESULTS

Provided later once survey results are examined.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Donors will vary their communication preferences based on which generation they were born in. Nonprofits in the present day are limiting themselves in approaching donors with a blanket solicitation method. Relationship cultivation can be approached by tailoring their targeted generation solicitation so that it leads to a higher dollar gift. For example, meta research has shown that tax incentives for higher income consumers do not appear to be price elastic than lower-income consumers. This has implications for marketers of nonprofits that incorrectly assume that higher income donors will be more concerned with tax advantages (Peloza, 2005). In the end, a true reasoning for a donor giving is strongly because of a trusting relationship with a seasoned fundraiser and the cause they represent.

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GLOBAL MARKETING

SIDS ECONOMIC PROSPECTS: THE IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE ON BUSINESS INVESTMENT

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ABSTRACT

Small Island Developing States have been and remain a priority for supranational organizations in terms of economic development. Any economic gains these states have made in the past twenty years are potentially jeopardized by changes in demography. These changes are likely to impact economic and business conditions in the island economies and thereby the likelihood of new business investment. Using World Bank data, this paper examines past progress and projects the likelihood of future change. Particular emphasis is made on Education, Migration and Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

There were several conferences in the late 1990's and early 2000's that emphasized the need for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to improve living standards. For instance, the UN organized conferences in Barbados in 1994, Mauritius in 2005 and Samoa in 2014. The reports from these conferences generated several scholarly contributions focusing on resilience to climate change, fragile eco-systems, access to finance, and better data collection (Dubrie 2022).

Over the period of 2000 to 2020, there have been considerable changes across the globe. In the context of SIDS there have been positive changes and some changes 'not in that category' (Roberts et al 2020). The following paper examines the changes at the national demographic 'level' and draws some conclusions about the next 20-year horizon ad the possible impact on international investment flows.

SUCCESS: WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

We are now twenty years into the Millennium and Table 1 offers some numbers on the progress of a sub-group of SIDS; larger (by population), Anglophone, Caribbean Islands. The Table also includes data on some developed economies and the World (overall) to provide a reference point. Due to the impact of the pandemic on certain categories the data was drawn from 2019 instead of 2020, because some numbers were significantly impacted in that last year.

Table 1: Select Metrics for Select Larger Anglophone Caribbean Countries

Variable	GDP per Capita (Current US $)			Life Expectancy (at Birth)		% GDP Healthcare		Internet Usage (% Pop^{n})	
Country	2000	2019*	% Growth	2000	2019*	2000	2019*	2000	2020
Antigua & Barbuda	11010	23880	216.9	75	79	4.72	4.38	6	73**
The Bahamas	24849	35299	142.0	72	71	3.8	5.9	8	92
Barbados	11506	16631	144.6	74	77	5.33	6.19	4	82
Belize	7559	9411	124.5	69	74	3.94	6.07	6	60
Grenada	7306	16046	219.6	73	75	5.36	4.93	4	75
Guyana	5903	13364	226.4	64	69	3.19	4.93	1	82
Jamaica	6451	10678	165.5	71	72	5.64	6.1	3	79
St Lucia	9261	16116	174.0	71	73	4.86	4.33	5	78
St Vincent & The Grenadines	6486	14458	222.9	71	73	3.98	4.32	3	80
Trinidad & Tobago	13821	26380	194.1	69	74	4.23	6.82	8	68
United Kingdom	26541	49288	185.7	78	81	7.98	9.87	27	95
United States	36330	65120	179.2	77	79	12.49	16.68	43	91
France	26091	50501	193.5	79	83	9.58	11.1	14	85
World	8007	17628	220.1	68	73	8.62	9.83	7	60

Source: World Bank 2023
*2019 Chosen as last full reporting year prior to the pandemic
** 2016 latest report
† Impact of oil price fluctuations

The Word Bank data in Table 1 indicates that overall the World has done reasonably well despite the headwinds of two major recessions (early 2000's and 2009-2010) and a major pandemic. Using the World Bank 'Purchasing Power Parity' metric, the World average increased 220%. Two decades ago, four of the SIDS countries were above the World average (The Bahamas, Barbados, St Lucia and T&T). Twenty years on, only The Bahamas, T&T and Antigua & Barbuda are above the World average.

Moving beyond economics to health, most countries experienced small gains in Life Expectancy at Birth. Now, all in the dataset except Guyana are still at or above the World average. In terms of general health, more is spent (% of GDP) on healthcare, but almost all the islands spend less than the World average.

One could argue that Internet Access does not bring "happiness" (necessarily), but it is a metric of being informed and having access to information. Whether this makes people happier or not is a debate for another paper. In this context, Internet Access brings information and opportunity, which can be used as proxies for "happiness". All countries in this set are above the World average.

Overall, the Anglophone Caribbean is healthier, longer lived, and 'happier' than it was twenty years ago, but has not managed to keep up (at least with the World average) in terms of economic gains. Having established that 'things are mostly better than they were', we need to examine the extent to which this new position is a stable platform for future development.

CONCERNS: WHAT THE DATA PORTENDS

If we scratch the surface of the overall picture, we find data that challenges the assumption of stability. Table 2 reports data on population trends within the countries of the Anglophone Caribbean. The first columns report population totals at ten-year intervals (2019 is the last complete year prior to the pandemic). The final column reports population growth over the whole period. The largest gain is seen in Belize. The only reduction was in St Vincent and the Grenadines, and that shrinkage seemed to occur steadily over the period.

Moving to Urbanization, there is some interesting data here because five countries report gains and five show declines. Perhaps for a region with the level of economic and environmental fragility and potential for disaster these numbers should not be surprising.

Table 2: Changes in Population Structure for SIDS Economies 2000 to 2020

Variable	**Population**			**Fertility Rate (Births Per Woman)**			**Urbanization (by decade) % of total**	**Growth(%) 2000-2020**
Country	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**		
Antigua & Barbuda	75055	85695	92664	2.2	1.8	1.6	32;26;24	23.46
The Bahamas	325014	373272	406471	2.1	1.8	1.4	36;36;37	25.00
Barbados	264657	274711	280693	1.8	1.7	1.6	34;32;31	6.0

Belize	240406	322106	394921	3.6	2.6	2.0	45;45;46	64.27
Grenada	107432	114039	123663	2.6	2.2	2.0	36;36;37	15.1
Guyana	759051	747932	797202	3.0	2.7	2.4	29;27;27	5.0
Jamaica	2612205	2733896	2820436	2.2	1.7	1.4	52;54;56	7.97
St Lucia	159500	170935	179237	2.2	1.5	1.4	28;18;19	12.37
St Vincent & The Grenadines	113813	109308	104632	2.3	2.1	2.0	45;49;53	-8.07
Trinidad & Tobago	1332203	1410296	1518147	1.7	1.7	1.6	56;54;53	13.99
World (000)	6140000	6970000	7950000	2.7	2.6	2.3	47;52;56	29.47

Source: World Bank 2023

The Fertility Rate is possibly the most important statistic moving forward. These numbers point to a difficult future for all the islands. The population replacement rate is 2.1 children per woman. The World Average sits slightly above that (2.3).

In this group, only Guyana reports a rate above the replacement rate. Some countries have rates significantly lower than replacement (e.g. The Bahamas, Jamaica, and St Lucia at 1.4). The implication of these numbers is explored below.

CONCERNS: WHAT THE FUTURE MAY BRING

Table 3 drills down further into the data and reports population numbers by Age Group. For ease of presentation, the groups reported here are approximately School Age (0-15), Working Population (15-64) and Retirees (65+). Obviously, some people do not quite fit into these classifications (e.g. newborns don’t go to School and some 67-year-olds still work). But these headings are useful for discussing the implications of the numbers as reported above.

Sustaining the gains already made will be the challenge facing future governments. In 2000, the share of the population pre-school or in-school ranged from 22% (Barbados) to 40% (Belize). By 2020 the range was a high of 29% (Guyana and Belize) and a low of 17% (Barbados). The World average fell from 30% to 26%. Referring to Table 2, the Fertility Rates are probably the main reason this number has fallen consistently across the region and period. The fact that the working population has also risen consistently has been a boon for all the economies and probably explains why per capita income has risen as it has (See Table 1). This situation is not just applicable to SIDS (see OECD 2022 p.13).

Table 3: Population by Age Group 2000-2020

Variable	**Population 0-14 (% of Total)**		**Population 15-65 (% of Total)**		**Population 65+ (% of Total)**		**Ratio 64+: <15**	
Country	**2000**	**2020**	**2000**	**2020**	**2000**	**2020**	**2000**	**2020**

Antigua & Barbuda	28	19	65	71	7	10	4.0	1.9
The Bahamas	30	20	65	71	5	8	6.0	3.33
Barbados	22	17	67	67	11	15	2.0	1.13
Belize	40	29	56	66	4	5	10.0	5.8
Grenada	33	24	58	66	8	10	4.125	2.4
Guyana	37	29	60	65	4	6	9.25	4.83
Jamaica	33	21	60	72	6	7	5.5	3.0
St Lucia	32	19	61	73	7	9	4.57	2.11
St Vincent & The Grenadines	32	22	61	67	7	11	4.57	2.0
Trinidad & Tobago	26	20	69	70	5	11	5.2	1.818
World	30	26	63	65	7	9	4.286	2.888

Source: World Bank 2023

In 2000, the World Average for the Age Groups identified was 30%, 63%, and 7% respectively. In 2020, the numbers for the World were 26%, 65%, and 9%. Small changes but the ratio of School Age to Retired changed from 4.28 to 2.88.

Almost all countries in the Anglophone Caribbean report declines in the School Age Group. The smallest fall was in T&T (6%) but most others experienced declines closer to 9-11%. The Retired Age group increased across the board with some small increases (Belize 2%) and some much larger (T&T 6%). Commensurately, the ratio of School Age to Retired fell across the group too.

This point needs further emphasis. With a reduced Fertility rate, longer Life Expectancy and a smaller School Age group the burden of paying for 'societal infrastructure' is going to be a lot higher on a smaller group in the coming decades.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

If the future for the Anglophone Caribbean is as described above then three factors will become major policy considerations; now and in the foreseeable future. These three are:

1) ***Education*** – only by having a better educated work force will the islands be able to attract the investors needed to maintain and build the infrastructure of the islands;
2) ***Migration*** – in the context of this discussion we mean that migration (outward) is zero or as close to zero as possible;
3) ***Productivity*** – ultimately, all sectors of society have to improve productivity, and as much as many wish this to be a personal decision (as opposed to a government policy supported by programs), that is unlikely to work effectively.

The table below includes World Bank data on two of the above three factors. The dataset is not complete so gaps are noted to ensure we understand there is no total comparison here.

Table 4: Migration and Education 2000-2019

Variable	Net Migration		Education as a % of GDP	
Country	**2000**	**2019**	**2000**	**2019**
Antigua & Barbuda	271	0	2.5†	2.8
The Bahamas	846	1001	2.2	2.3
Barbados	-833	-65	4.7	3.2
Belize	1678	1164	5.0	7.1
Grenada	-386	-190	-	3.6
Guyana	-13176	-24678	8.5	4.5††
Jamaica	-18500	-11329	5	5.2
St Lucia	-773	0	5.7	3.3
St Vincent & The Grenadines	-1618	-758	7.9	5.7††
Trinidad & Tobago	-5185	-19248	2.8	3.7

Source: World Bank 2023
† 2012
†† 2018

Migration

Two countries have managed to hold onto and add to their populations (The Bahamas and Belize). Most others have lost people over the period through emigration. Anecdotally, Bahamians will tell you (and the data demonstrates) fluctuations due to fairly substantial numbers of Haitians fleeing their country and using The Bahamas as a springboard to get elsewhere. The Hurricane (Dorian) of a few years ago is still having an effect so The Bahamas data is subject to several stresses.

In this category, SIDS must try to retain their populations and encourage younger people not to seek their future lives in other countries. This is a tough proposition to sell to those who only want to “get off the island”.

Education

The only way to improve the lives of the people in a country is to invest in them (OECD 2022). This starts with education (K-12) and continues beyond. The average for developed countries is around 5% of GDP. The World average is 4% of GDP. The majority of the countries included here spend less than the World average on education.

Productivity

Ultimately, this is where the future of the islands’ well being can be found. Only by improving the productivity of the population can a future of stability and improvement be found. This probably requires an increase in education expenditure; -Pre-K, K and Grades 1-3 would be the most logical place to start. If children struggle to read they have much less chance of developing more advanced skills in later grades.

As time progresses, each of the SIDS will have to make sure that students leaving the school system are ready to be productive workers (OECD 2005). The whole area of School-to-Work is something that needs to be addressed head on and improvements made as soon as possible. **This makes the current policy imperative for each country government to improve the transition from school-to-work and increase the productivity of the young workers as they join the labor force.**

CONCLUSIONS

Business investment flows toward the opportunities available (Chen 2021). As much as SIDS' economies have performed well over the past 20 years we have to look at the demographic trends to see where investment is likely to be attracted.

If we are to summarize the above discussion it might look like "so far so good, but is it sustainable?" Therein lies the problem. The data presented above show that gains in SIDS have been made but the World has gained too; sometimes in greater terms (e.g. GDP per Capita).

The Fertility Rate and the ratio of School Age population to Retired Population indicate a potential future of fewer workers generating a tax base for more retirees. For this not to be the case action needs to be taken soon; or even sooner. Few of the SIDS have the resources to tackle the issues without assistance. The Inter-American Development Bank, UNESCO, the United Nations, and a collective effort from CARICOM are needed too. Failure to address these concerns soon will result potentially bad future outcomes.

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VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGIES ADOPTION IN RETAIL INDUSTRY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INDIAN CONSUMERS

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

India ranks as the second fastest-growing economy in the world, the third largest economy in the world in terms of GDP, and the fourth largest economy in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). The Indian retail sector has experienced rapid growth and is expected to reach $ 2 trillion by 2032 (Economic Times 2023).

The retail industry is an important contributor to the overall Indian economy, accounting for approximately 10% of its GDP and employing over 40 million people (i.e., 8% of employment). India's retail industry includes both unorganized and organized sectors. The unorganized sector includes small mom-and-pop stores, street vendors, and traditional open markets, while the organized sector consists of modern retail outlets like convenience stores, supermarkets, and malls.

While most industries experienced an economic decline during COVID-19, the retail sector (specifically e-commerce) in India demonstrated remarkable resilience. Online shopping has continued to experience an increase in demand as a result of people avoiding crowded locations. In order to enhance user experience and create efficiencies, retailers are increasingly adopting virtual technologies (VT). This research focuses on the adoption and diffusion of VT among consumers within the Indian retailing sector. The primary purpose is to highlight the advantages and identify the difficulties in adopting VT (e.g., augmented reality-AR, virtual reality-VR, and 3D modeling) by Indian consumers within the retailing sector. The secondary purpose is to investigate several factors including organizational culture, top management support, perceived utility, and usability that are critical in the adoption and diffusion of VT throughout the retail sector in India.

The research methodology for this study involved gathering data from retail consumers through multiple methods (i.e., focus groups, in-depth interviews, and surveys). The study was conducted among an urban population that visits small retail stores, street vendors, supermarkets, and which has previously used recently introduced technologies such as QR codes, online ordering and digital payments. The final sample for the survey consisted of 131 respondents.

Results

The respondents mostly consisted of shoppers between 18 to 50 years old, who were gainfully employed and had used VT in physical or virtual stores. The respondents generally felt that VT can be a success as it can provide better product visualization and accurate product information. Various factors were identified that could facilitate the adoption of VTs. Those factors were rated according to customer perception. Customers reported enjoying the technology's intelligence and interactivity as well as the information it offers during the buying process. The study shows that younger consumers (i.e., 18-30) are more receptive to utilizing VT in the food retail industry (i.e., grocery stores) for a better and more user-friendly experience. Overall, the study shows that VT has the potential to revolutionize the Indian retail sector by giving customers improved shopping experiences and enhancing business efficiency for retailers. Although there are some challenges in adopting these new technologies, the advantages they offer in terms of enhancing customer engagement, enhancing brand recognition, and boosting sales make them a worthwhile investment for retailers. As customers demand more immersive purchasing experiences and retailers work to stay ahead of the competition, the use of VTs in the retail sector is a trend that is likely to grow and change over the coming years.

Based on the key findings from the study, the suggestions for the Indian retailers are as follows:

- Promote VT awareness: Given that only 60% of the respondents were aware of the various VT in both offline and online contexts, it is crucial to promote VT awareness in the retail sector.
- Create virtual reality product demonstrations.
- Implement VT in the food retail sector: Given that the majority of respondents in the 18-30 age range expressed a desire for VT to be implemented by the food retail sector for improved user experience, the food retail sector must implement VT extensively.
- Address the perceived cost and technical knowledge issues: According to the respondents, the perceived cost of implementing VT in retail stores and the required technical knowledge could either accelerate or slow the implementation of VT.
- Offer augmented reality-based personalized shopping experiences: Since a majority of respondents expressed interest in augmented reality-based personalized shopping experiences, retail establishments must offer interactive displays, in-store navigation, and product visualization to enhance the shopping experience.

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QUICK COMMERCE ADOPTION AMONG INDIAN CONSUMERS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Quick commerce (often abbreviated as Q-commerce) is a sub-field of e-commerce that has shown rapid growth in the past few years. The distinguishing feature of Q-commerce is, as the name suggests, a focus on speed in the fulfilment of e-commerce transactions, through web and mobile app interfaces with the customer. A large proportion of Q-commerce is accounted for by businesses providing delivery of food, groceries, and other household purchases to consumers. According to McKinsey (2022), in addition to a huge growth in e-commerce transactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the speed of e-commerce transactions in the delivery sector has seen a significant reduction, from previous delivery times of 30 minutes or an hour to current promises of 10-15 minute delivery completion from order. The Q-commerce model utilizes a central hub, distribution centers, and last-mile delivery stores to execute order fulfilment.

While Q-commerce has been growing tremendously, there is a singular lack of research attention to the field, its contours and dynamics, and therefore in an understanding of the marketing elements of the field. Research within the business disciplines appears to be limited to the logistical challenges of delivery, and little attention has been paid to Q-commerce's product concept, consumer acceptance, and potential diffusion. Though relatively unknown in the US, Quick-commerce has seen success in countries such as India, China, and Turkey, and some of the leading firms in those countries are reportedly seeking to expand across the globe (McKinsey 2022).

While Q-commerce has spawned numerous start-up operations and has also attracted the attention of established e-commerce players, the sector has also shown signs of faltering due to, among other reasons, a lack of consumer enthusiasm and market dynamics. Therefore, at a stage when the industry is seeking greater diffusion and market expansion, it may be an appropriate time to focus academic research on the marketing of Q-commerce firms, especially consumer acceptance. This paper seeks to study consumer acceptance of Q-commerce in India, where Q-commerce has made a big splash and is expected to be on a huge growth spree shortly (*FRPT - Ecommerce Snapshot* 2022).

Using a convenience sample of 70, an exploratory study was conducted to study differences in consumer adoption of Q-commerce apps by gender, age, and occupation. The study found that age, gender, income, and education level significantly influenced the adoption of Q-commerce

apps. Younger consumers were more likely to adopt Q-commerce than older consumers. Female consumers were more likely to adopt Q-commerce than male consumers. Consumers with higher income and education levels were more likely to adopt Q-commerce than those with lower income and education levels. The study also found that perceived convenience and perceived risk significantly influenced the adoption of Q-commerce: those who perceived Q-commerce as more convenient were more likely to adopt it while consumers who perceived Q-commerce as riskier were less likely to adopt it.

This exploratory study into the effects of demographic and cognitive differences on the adoption of Q-commerce provides a beginning to understanding Q-commerce adoption. The scope for research into adoption and usage behavior is vast – since there is very little research to date – and also timely since the Q-commerce industry is getting established and seeking to expand its geographical frontiers. From the point of view of manufacturers of consumer products, in the end, Q-commerce is another channel of distribution, but one that appears to be growing at the expense of traditional retailing. Thus, manufacturers might want to focus research on consumer choice in this dynamic retail environment: how best to align their supply chains to better serve the Q-commerce sector, as well as how to influence consumer choice and satisfaction.

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ESG AND POLITICAL MARKETING

DO I BELIEVE THEIR CSR ACTIVITIES? ANTECEDENTS OF CSR MESSAGE BELIEVABILITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARD CSR MESSAGE AND THE CO MPANY

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Dahlsrud (2008) described corporate social responsibility (CSR) as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (p. 7). In recent years, there has been an increased focus on understanding consumers’ responses to companies’ CSR-related activities and how the companies are communicating about those engagements (Camilleri, 2021; Du et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2021). Oftentimes, companies communicate about their CSR engagements through press release (PR) messages on their corporate websites. For example, Fortune 500 companies (e.g., Walmart, Lowes, Microsoft, Apple, Albertson) engage in CSR activities to project their pro-social, pro-environmental, and ethical image. Walmart is working toward making its communications on the supply chain more transparent, becoming more environmentally sustainable, and contributing to the well-being of the local communities (Walmart, 2023). Microsoft is actively investing in reducing is carbon footprint and has reduced 2.5 million metric tons of carbon between 2021 and 2022, meeting its two-year goal, with a target of removing all historic carbon footprints by 2050 (Microsoft, 2022). Lowes donated $1 million to the Maui community to help them recover from the brunt of a wildfire calamity in 2023 (Lowes, 2023). However, despite a company’s best intentions to serve society, the communications about their ethical and responsible actions may face skepticism and unfavorable responses amongst consumers (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how consumers’ individual differences play a role in evoking trust toward the CSR PR messages communicated by the companies. Additionally, it is worthwhile to explore if the believability toward the CSR PR message may translate into favorable attitudes toward the CSR PR messages and the company. This study contributes insights to this end.

Conducting an online survey (*n* = 468) with the U.S. national population, we found that perceived self-efficacy, volunteerism, and moral obligation positively influence and need for sensation-seeking negative influences message believability for public relations (PR) communications on corporate social responsibility (CSR). Message believability positively influences attitude toward PR messages and the company. The companies should incorporate

messages reflecting self-efficacy, volunteerism, and moral obligation in the PR communications to improve consumers' trust in the company and the CSR PR messages communicated by them. Messages reflecting risks should be avoided to minimize trust issues with the CSR PR messages and the company.

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WHY DO THE CHICKENS NOT CROSS THE ROAD AND TAKE A STAND? MARKETING'S ABDICATION OF ITS COVID-19 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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ABSTRACT

We marketers are in the business of selling stuff. (Or, as we like to term it, discerning the needs and wants of our consumers.) We marketers are in the business of consumer education. (Or, as we like to term it, promotion.). We marketers are in the business of doing societal good...or so we say. Why else do we constantly prattle on about the societal marketing concept. So, what have we done lately? By lately of course, we are talking about the era of COVID-19. Have we done our part to promote healthy behaviors, or have we marketers chickened out? Do I hear a clucking sound?

INTRODUCTION

"…who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him."
Prince Prospero
Edgar Allan Poe, The Masque of the Red Death

Blasphemous mockery, indeed. And yet, there are many who see the masking of their friends, neighbors, and co-workers as an affront to their own independence and rights (and their own masking sensibilities and interpretation of what COVID19 was, is, and has become). Here's a question for you at this point in history. When is a mask not a mask? Indeed, when is a mask more than just a mask? The answer? Now, apparently.

The "mask" is, seemingly, no longer a medical device. (Okay, it is…but it also isn't. More about that later.) It has become a statement. Fashion, political, whatever. It has transcended mask-hood and become a marker of one's views on life, the universe, and everything else. The mask is no longer about preventing virus-containing spittle from splattering nearby people and flat surfaces. No. It has become intertwined with who we are as individuals.

In much the same way, vaccinations have become the stuff of paranoia and political ideology. When is a vaccine not a vaccine? Again, apparently at this point in history. Heavy sigh.

SCIENCE, MEDICINE, MARKETING, AND EXPECTATIONS

"The river where you set your foot just now is gone—
those waters giving way to this, now this."
Heraclitus

The problem with medicine is that, as a field, it is scientific. Go figure. This is not a problem for me personally, mind you. I get it. Unfortunately, many people have a misconception about what science is and what it can and can't do. It may well be that this misunderstanding has played a role, attitudinally, in the rejection of vaccinations and masks on the part of some folks.

In marketing, consumers are often upset and dissatisfied when their expectations are not met. Could it be, perhaps, that incorrect expectations regarding what science is about may be the fly in our societally collective ointment?

The reality is that science never proves anything. Hypotheses are theorized and proposed. These hypotheses are then tested, and we either disprove them or fail to disprove them. Please note that I did not say that we prove a hypothesis. That never happens. Never, ever. We only fail to disprove hypotheses. If we fail to disprove them enough times, we begin to think of them as being "facts." We think this way right up until the time, that is, when they (hypotheses) are disproven, and another hypothesis/theory takes their place.

Certainly, there may be many who misunderstand what science is (and the operational philosophy behind it). Why are so many folks distrustful of vaccines? Why do so many refuse to wear masks? Why do so many distrust the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)? Why have so many demonized Dr. Fauci? It may well drill down to erroneous expectations regarding what science is and what it is not. Science is ever changing. That does not mean, however, that it should be distrusted.

Certainly, the advice and recommendations given out by these individuals and institutions have changed over time. Why? Because scientific hypotheses, theories, and beliefs change over time. They are not unlike a virus, constantly changing and evolving over time in response to the environment. Hypotheses are proposed, tested, fail to be disproved for a while…then…new information causes a rethinking of things…and new hypotheses are proposed. Science is constantly in flux and any expectation or belief that it is certain, concrete, and unchanging is incorrect. In science, the truth matters, and that truth is objective, constantly being tested, and changeable.

Marketing, on the other hand, is a "social" science. We know this all too well. Our measurement instruments are not very good. We are dealing with subjects (people/consumers) whose viewpoints are fickle, mercurial, and ever changing. On the bright side, marketers have gotten used to the fact that reality is fleeting and, in many ways, does not matter. Who, after all, is qualified to judge reality? No, it is perception that matters in marketing. Perhaps that is why marketers see the world in a way quite different from medical professionals and hard scientists. To the hard scientist, reality matters. To a marketer, reality is a momentary perception. Marketing is not rocket science. Its lack of cold, hard objectivity makes it much harder.

At this point in time, it seems very clear that vaccines and masks are safe and effective weapons that can be used to combat the transmission and mutation of COVID19. (Don't believe me, ask your physician.) It is also very clear that many folks do not share this view of reality. Instead, their perceptions seem to be that the vaccines are dangerous (or have some other problematic issue associated with them) and that masks are unnecessary and ineffective. It is, therefore, not the reality that is the problem…it is the perception of that reality where the problem lies. If a person is waiting for the science to be finalized with regard to COVID19, one may well wait forever to get vaccinated and/or begin wearing a mask. There is a societal cost to such decision delay. Unfortunately for us all, the cost of such delay is not just borne by any one individual, but by society as a whole.

MASKS AND THE POSITIONING CONUNDRUM

"It is not events that disturb people, it is their judgements concerning them."
Epictetus

In marketing, we have a concept (one of our most cherished) called positioning. It can be defined as the place a product occupies within a person's mind. It is an interpretation of stimuli. It is a mental state, a perception. It may, or may not, have anything at all to do with reality. In point of fact, reality, to us marketers, does not matter at all. Much like beauty, the mental "position" of an object is in the eye of the beholder. We label things as better or worse, good or bad, effective and ineffective not based on some universal truth…but based on our perceptions and beliefs. It is these perceptions and beliefs that are reflected in what we buy…in our purchases. So, too, it is with masks (and the COVID19 vaccine). Whether or not the vaccine is effective…or masks are effective (in reality) matters not one whit. What does matter is how these objects are viewed in the minds of individual consumers. Right or wrong, perception is what dictates buying or use (as well as buy-in).

Given this, absent a change in perception and mental state, no scientific evidence (even if one believes in such evidence) will be effective in convincing folks to take a shot (or two, or three, or four) or mask up. It is perceptions which must be changed. (Changing perceptions? That's marketing's forte.) Getting a vaccine (or two, or three, or four) is not just about any one individual. It is about everyone else as well. Such behaviors should not just be viewed as an act of self-protection and preservation, but as an act of selflessness designed to benefit society as a whole. (Can you say societal marketing concept?). While vaccines (obviously) matter, let's simplify things and primarily deal with masking as an issue. In many ways it is perhaps more interesting as it is an outward manifestation of a belief schema in a way that vaccination status (based on its inherent invisibility) was never and will never be.

With regard to facial coverings, the major focus (to date) has been on masking up to prevent disease. If an individual is in denial that such an action will decrease the probability of transmitting the virus (or of receiving said-same virus), there is little incentive for facial obscurement as an action of intervention. What, then, is to be done?

Relabel. Rebrand. Reposition. There's your answer. Listen, if one does not view a mask as an effective medical device, that belief may not be easily changed. It may be nigh on impossible to change the perception to one of efficacious medical necessity. I don't know about the rest of you, but I have never found pounding my head against a brick wall (figuratively) to be terribly rewarding. Why try?

So, then, what is the mask if it is not a medical implement? The mask is something more. It is about courtesy. It is about politeness. It is about making others feel comfortable. It is about keeping your spittle off of me and the flat objects around me. (Look folks, I don't want your spittle all over me and my stuff in the best of times. Now? No way.) Fair enough?

In repositioning the mask, we must also attend to the repositioning of the bare face. (Some folks have medical issues precluding masking up. They are not the issue.) What then is a bare face really communicating? What is it about? What is it saying about the non-mask-utilizing hordes? A mask is not about a constitutional right. Refusing to wear a mask is not a measure of freedom (unless you think smoking in a non-smoking area is about your personal freedom; if so, I don't know what to tell you). It is not about your political belief(s) of choice. It is certainly not about patriotism. Failing to mask up (when ill or requested) is about being rude, discourteous, uncaring, selfish, and unkind. By not wearing a mask, you are forcing all around you to swipe right for you and your droplets of spittle (whether one wants to breathe and/or touch your spittle, or not). Breathing on someone against their will in times of a pandemic is an aggressive act. (I leave it to you all to further explore this analogy. I'm not going there.)

Nevertheless, it is what it is. Social stigmatization will probably be a more effective positioning tool than any rational medical evidence. My personal slogan of choice would be *keep your spit to yourself or keep your distance*. You may, however, choose your own catchphrase. Will this strategy work on those willing to punch teachers, give Nazi salutes to school boards, or rip masks off those seeking a modicum of protection? I doubt anything will in the near-term. Given certain research findings (Wallace, Goldsmith-Pinkham, & Schwartz 2023), natural selection may eventually solve this problem, although, I hope it doesn't come to that. Despite everything, many will persist in seeing themselves as non-masking heroes. Why this is still a hill to die on (and I hopefully mean that figuratively) for so many is, quite frankly, a puzzle.

NEEDS, WANTS, AND ALL THAT JAZZ

"If I go, there will be trouble
And if I stay it will be double"
Topper Headon, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon, Joe Strummer
Should I Stay or Should I Go (The Clash, Combat Rock)

As Detective Columbo (he of vintage TV fame) might say at this point in time, just one more thing. This will only take a minute. Marketing is all about understanding the needs and wants of customers. Needs and wants are not the same thing. Many businesses, rightfully, were chomping at the bit to fully reopen and interact with their customers face-to-face. You know, the way things used to be. Sad to say, we may never be able to go home again. Things may never "fully" be as they once were. Times change. One must accept such. Amor fati.

Moving forward, the question that begs answering, from a marketing standpoint, is whether such face-to-face interactions (during a pandemic) are a need or a want. Certainly, when tangible products are being exchanged, one could argue that such is a need. On the other hand, if non-tangible things (like knowledge or information) are to be exchanged, a face-to-face interaction would seem to be a want…and not a necessity. Certainly, it would be easier, and more familiar, to live as we once did. That ship, my friends, has sailed. It would be foolish to think that "normal" will ever be normal again. It would be foolish to think that COVID will permanently vanish or that another pandemic will not, eventually, surface. We are not, after all, in Kansas anymore.

So, ponder if you will my fellow marketers, the idea of needs versus wants. Is face-to-face interaction truly a need? Or is face-to-face interaction (in such circumstances) merely a want? Is that want merely the residue of a yearning and longing for the way things used to be? The past, and this goes without saying, is history. Is living in that history something you <u>need</u> to do? Or, instead, is it something you and/or your customers <u>want</u> to do in lieu of changing and adapting to the current (and probably future) circumstances? Is your business a victim of COVID19 or of your own (and your customers') lack of innovation, imagination, and ability to face and accept change? Finally, do your (or your customer's) wants conflict with society's needs? I thought we marketers were supposed to take such societal needs into account (Kotler 2004). Food for thought. Personally, I'll take my food for thought (during a pandemic) via delivery or curbside pickup, thank you very much. Better safe than sorry.

THE FINAL STRAW

"We have met the enemy, and he is us."
Pogo the Possum
Walt Kelly

So, what's the big deal? "If I don't want to get vaccinated and/or wear a mask, that is none of your business," an unmasked (and likely unvaccinated) "hero" might say. "After all, I'm only hurting myself, right?" Wrong. In point of fact, you are, in all probability, providing fertile ground for the virus to further mutate. You are nurturing its growth and pushing it toward a prosperous and long future. You are, in essence, probably harming humanity. Indeed, those who will not take every precaution necessary may well be the true virus. (An aside: Am I the only one who paid attention to the topic of socio-biology in high school and college? Sometimes, it seems that way. Sigh.)

Listen, normally I'd be happy to say, "Get on with your denial-fest." But please, let the rest of us get on with our lives. And, getting on with one's life involves, at its core, continuing to live. Continuing to live is more likely if the virus (and future ones) can be contained and prevented from further mutation. The same goes for any future pandemics. Clear?

Let us be brave enough to point history's finger at ourselves. Perhaps the fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves as marketers. Are these issues (masks and vaccinations), as Gaski (1985) might posit, problems solely for politicians and governmental entities? Or, as Kotler (2004) might say, do we marketers have a certain amount of responsibility in coming to the aid of society? Splitting the difference here, perhaps businesses (and the associated marketers working for said-same entities) should stay out of all things controversial and political (Godwin 2023). On the other hand, what about academic marketers. What should our role have been? We don't have to worry (in the same way) about offending our customers. Are we then afraid of violent rhetoric? Of actual violence? Were we (are we) chickens afraid to cross the road? Afraid to cross the anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers? Afraid to do battle with our mightiest of weapons, the 4 Ps?

Was this all (masks and vaccines) a matter of positioning (that we marketers could have done something about)? Should we have done a better job at promoting mask wearing (Jiang & Dodoo 2021) and of promoting (to the existential horror of RFK Jr.) vaccinations? Let us look in the proverbial mirror at our professional inaction. To reiterate, as Walt Kelly (via Pogo the Possum) would say, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Well, not actually all of us.

While it would be nice if we were (societally) able to heed the advice of Chip Diller, as portrayed by Kevin Bacon in Animal House ("*Remain calm. All is well. All is well!),* all is, obviously, still <u>not</u> well. We need to consider our role as marketers moving forward toward the next pandemic (not that the COVID-19 pandemic has vanished, mind you). Nevertheless, we should, however, keep a good thought and be comforted in the knowledge that despite our differences, everything comes back, within six degrees, to Kevin Bacon at some point. On <u>that</u>, at least, we can all agree. That my friends, is a position(ing) we can all agree on.

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ENHANCING POLITICAL MARKETING EFFICACY THROUGH POSITIVE MESSAGE FRAMING

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The emergence and proliferation of political markets in which most voters are highly skeptical (essentially dismissing the entire political marketing process), as well as politicians themselves are among a set of entirely undesirable situations existing today. This is often a consequence of the overwhelming presence of negative political advertising. In fact, despite the declining efficacy of political advertisements, political campaigns continue to emphasize negative message framing and overlook using positive political advertising messages. Moreover, considering the potential impact of positive WOM/eWOM on voting intentions, more research is needed to understand the conditions and manner in which positive political marketing works (Iyer, Yazdanparast, and Strutton 2017). In order to address this gap and to secure additional actionable insights into how voters respond to political marketing messages, this study examines how voters' attitudinal and behavioral reactions are influenced by message type (positive vs. negative). This study also seeks to understand the mechanism underlying the use of positive messaging in political advertising and examines the effect of message uniqueness and attitude towards communication in the context of message type and WOM/e-WOM intentions.

Unlike conventional marketing, the norm in modern political marketing contexts is to "go negative." As a result, the current political marketplace is inundated by negative messaging. Voters exposed to yet another negative political message probably deem it less than diagnostic and useful, largely due to the excessive negativity they have experienced for years. Most political marketers, meanwhile, view negative messaging as the norm. Such off-putting attributions surely impose their effects, wherein message recipients perceive negative political commentary as "arranged;" thereby discounting its value. The impact of negative information in political messages, for instance, lowers favorability ratings of political candidates. Such consumer responses may reduce the potency of negative messages in political marketing contexts. The opportunity to disconfirm expectations by "breaking-good" in a "bad-political-world" thus may represent an actionable way to enhance the credibility and potency of political messages. The unconventional nature of positive political messages should also enhance the perceptions of message uniqueness. This, too, should ultimately influence the WOM/e-WOM and voting intentions of customers. This proposition is consistent with the augmenting aspect of augmenting-discounting principle. The principle suggests that when individuals or communication sources provide information that counter or contradict conventional expectations, recipients, being naïve

interpreters, generally believe the source is providing authentic opinions. The presence of this condition should positively influence voters' evaluation of message and communication source alike and ultimately should impact behavioral intentions. As such, it is worthwhile to examine the effectiveness of political message tone (positive vs. negative). To that end, two studies are conducted to test the hypothesized relationships. Study 1 considers generational differences (younger vs. older voters) and uses vignettes designed to manipulate message type (negative vs. positive). Study 2 examines the preferences for positive vs. negative political messages (through specifically developed political ads), evaluates the effectiveness of positive vs. negative political marketing messages, and examines their power in stimulating WOM/e-WOM and voting intentions among individuals. The diagnostic role of message uniqueness is also examined to uncover the underlying mechanism for the impact of positive political messages on voters. The study provides further evidence for the differential impacts of message type and communication mode. Data are collected through an online survey administrated by Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk).

The primary contribution of the present research is highlighting the effectiveness of positive messaging in terms of receptivity and stimulating WOM/e-WOM in the political arena, thereby extending the literature on political marketing. Despite the overwhelming prevalence of negatives messages in political marketing and the lack of conclusive evidence for its effectiveness (Krupnikov 2012), few studies have examined negative and positive messages – through a WOM/e-WOM perspective. We address this gap by simultaneously studying the impact of positive and negative political messages and showing that positive WOM/e-WOM messages do hold value in the political arena. This study also promotes a growing stream of research directed towards identifying and applying a more amicable way of political marketing (Serazio 2017). Second, the research highlights the role of *context* in determining the efficacy of positive or negative advertising and their stimulated WOM/e-WOM messages. Marketing in conventional spaces holds that positive WOM/e-WOM might be less effective that negative messages, given the high pervasiveness of positive messages and the higher perceived usefulness of negative messages (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006). The fact that the rarity of negative messages makes them more diagnostic in conventional marketing environment has been established. Negative narratives are more difficult to dislodge once they take hold and spread more readily, and are also deemed more useful by recipients (Filieri 2015). Our findings are in contrast with these existing works in literature and highlight how the rarity of the type of messages can impact their efficacy through their perceived uniqueness. From a managerial perspective, we answer the question pertaining to how political marketers can stimulate positive WOM/e-WOM and subsequent voting intentions among targeted voter blocs. Political marketers might generate additional WOM/e-WOM and/or voting intentions by violating conventional expectations (i.e., using negative messaging).

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MARKETING EDUCATION AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF COLLEGE STUDENTS: RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLISTIC THINKING & COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Mental health concerns among college students are worsening and recent articles in the Chronicle of Higher Education seem to indicate that it is at a breaking point (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2023). As a faculty member teaching marketing, what can we do to alleviate this in our students?

According to the World Health Organization, mental health can be thought of as a person's understanding of his or her skills, the ability to cope with day-to-day stress, and work productively and fruitfully. This study looks at two constructs, cognitive flexibility and holistic thinking and investigates the relationship these two variables have with the mental health of students, operationalized as psychological wellbeing (PWB). The influence these two variables has on students' academic performance will also be investigated.

In terms of study constructs, cognitive flexibility (CF) measures a person's ability to know in any situation that there are options & alternatives available, the willingness to be flexible to adapt to the situation, and having the confidence to behave effectively (Martin & Rubin, 1995). Holistic thinking involves focusing on relationships between objects within the environment compared to analytic thinking focuses on categorization and rules (Lux et al., (2022). Broadly defined as a state of positive psychological functioning or what it means to be psychologically well, PWB includes six dimensions (Ryff, 1989). They are: (1) Autonomy (AUT), (2) Environmental Mastery (EM), (3) Personal Growth PG), Positive Relationships with Others (PRO), (5) Purpose In life (PIL), and (6) Self-Acceptance (SA).

This study used a sample of 167 students from an AACSB accredited university in the Mid-South region of the U.S to investigate the following two research questions:

R1: Holistic thinking and cognitive flexibility will positively influence the PWB of college students.

R2: Holistic thinking and cognitive flexibility will positively influence the academic performance of college students.

While CF was measured using the scale developed by (Martin & Rubin, 1995), Holistic thinking (HT) was measured using the scale developed by Lux et al., (2022). The six dimensions of PWB were measured using the short form of the Ryff (1989) scale and performance was operationalized as performance perceptions and used the scale developed by (Macan et al., 1990). When testing the two research questions, demographic variables race, gender, credit hours completed as well as stress and anxiety were used as control variables. The scale developed by Cohen, Kamrack, & Mermelstein (1983) was used to measure stress while the scale developed by Spitzer et. al. (2006) was used to measure anxiety.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression was used to investigate the two research questions. Results showed that cognitive flexibility (CF) and holistic thinking (HT) positively influenced the two dimensions of PWB, autonomy (AUT) and personal growth (PG). Cognitive flexibility also positively influenced the three PWB dimensions, purpose in life (PIL), self-acceptance (SA), and positive relations with others (PRO). Holistic thinking had a positive influence on environmental mastery (EM). The relationships between CF and HT with perceived academic performance were not significant. In summary the two variables CF and HT, positively influenced some PWB dimensions of college students but not their perceived academic performance. Findings seem to indicate that uncovering new ways to increase students' cognitive flexibility and holistic thinking would improve their PWB and mental health. Considering that higher education is in the business of mental stimulus, findings suggest the need to include these findings to develop the whole student not just their academic knowledge and skills.

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UNESCO KEY COMPETENCIES AS APPLIED TO MARKETING PROJECTS

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The objectives of the research is to better understand the impact that a social impact marketing service-learning project has on students at a large public institution in terms of addressing key sustainable development competencies while seeking to understand if competencies have been achieved by reviewing the outcomes associated with research questions focused on if students benefitted from the project professionally, academically or personally and if the student effectively interacted well with teammates.

While there is much focus on including sustainability and social impact into university course curriculum required by accreditation boards, student and public interest, there is little instruction for instructors on how to do this. UNESCO does provide direction regarding targeted learning outcomes and key targeted competencies for educators to consider in “Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development” as part of the global movement to eradicate poverty. The stated learning outcomes needed for learners to develop into sustainability citizens, according to UNESCO, include the following: promoting ‘critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations’ (UNESCO, 2014b: 12). These learning outcomes are achieved by mastering key competencies that center around three categories: 1) Using tools (language, knowledge, information and technology) interactively; 2)Interacting in heterogeneous groups well by cooperating and resolving conflicts; 3) acting autonomously to see the larger picture ad formalize life plans and projects that defend rights interests and needs (Rychen, 2003).

This study analyzed journal entries from the MKT 4360 Social Impact Marketing in-person classes from the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. Projects that were not problematic were chosen and every 10th student (alphabetically) from these projects that provided consent to be reviewed for research with seven books with roughly 10 journal entries in each reviewed and coded. The study was conducted on campus by research assistant coders. No comparison group was used.

The data was collected from the reflection journal entries with prompts that addressed the UNESCO key competencies. The analysis revealed key themes including application themes of building professional connections (100%), adding projects and experiences to resumes (100%), developing leadership and collaboration skills (43%), communication and writing skills (43%) and enjoying moral achievement (43%). These themes overlay and address the key UNESCO competencies for developing sustainability citizens.

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IS A MARKETING INTERNSHIP OBTAINABLE AND WORTH IT? A LOOK AT A MANDATORY PROGRAM

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Perhaps the biggest stressor for undergraduate marketing students is obtaining an internship, particularly if the internship is a degree requirement for graduation. Students often ask basic questions like “Are there really many marketing internships or are they just sales internships?” Yet, industry estimates indicate that there are over 400,000 marketing internships available in the U.S. (Zippia, 2023). Students and administrators, in addition, often question whether “Is it worth the trouble to complete an internship or is there too much emphasis on experiential learning?” These questions have provided the basis for this study.

It appears as if internships can lead to the obtainment of key industry skills and better interview odds as academic programs in business schools often seek to help students by providing competitive skills with the assistance of experiential learning techniques such as internships to bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing real-world experiences (Silva et al., 2018). These experiential opportunities enhance the student’s degree requirements with employable skills which in turn lead to an increase in employability (Patron 2014). Focusing on industrialized countries, internships have become common and in a randomized field experience conducted by Baert et. al. (2019) job applicants with an internship experience enjoyed a 12.6% higher probability of being invited to a job interview in Belgium.

This study reviewed over 200 marketing internship job titles and job descriptions associated with a public university in a major metro area from Summer 2022 to Summer 2023. With this data, it is clear that students seeking a marketing degree obtained primarily, internships that focused on marketing (62% of 235 internships recorded). However, a strong percent (27%) completed an internship in sales while 11% accepted a management internship in order to fulfill their degree requirement. The skills and connections often led to a job, as well, per senior exit surveys. This study debunks the concern that a marketing (not sales) internship cannot be obtained and point to a thriving degree requirement policy. The research posits that internships are becoming essential to the academic experience and employment after graduation and thus should be pedagogically incorporated into the formal education to link formal education to work experience (Pilgrim 2012).

In addition, a positive intern-mentor relationship can influence the level of satisfaction and value of the internship. For example, the quality of the intern-mentor connection as it pertains to the exchange and task characteristics (autonomy, task variety and task significance and performance feedback) can influence intern performance which is an antecedent to satisfaction levels between the intern and mentor and affects the value of the internship (Bhattacharya and Neelam 2018). Therefore, pre- and post- responses from interns will provide insight into the

mentor-intern relationship definition and value, as expressed before and after the internship experience.

This study will provide results on the obtainment of and some of the positive aspects associated with marketing internships. In the Spring of 2023, the Business Administration Program in Undergraduate Students survey students before and after their internship experience to get a sense of the student's knowledge and understanding of what mentoring is in addition to the student's comfort level working with a mentor. The survey results indicated that because students worked with a mentor during the student's internship experience, students not only came away from the internship with a better understanding of what mentoring is, but they felt that the mentoring component of the internship enhanced the overall internship experience.

Of the 332 students surveyed before their internship began, 59% of respondents suggested that "they have a strong understanding of what working with a mentor involves." At the end of the internship, 65% of these students confirmed that "they had a strong understanding of what working with a mentor involves." In addition, 71% of students surveyed answered "strongly agree" to the question, "did you develop an appreciation for just how much their mentor helped them during the internship?" while 26% of students answered, "agree" to the same question. In other words, 97% of students appreciated working with a mentor throughout the internship experience.

Some of the interesting feedback received through the survey suggested that because students worked with a mentor during their internship, students felt less intimidated by the prospect of reaching out to a mentor. Additionally, students 59% of students indicated that they felt comfortable serving as a future mentor now that they have a better understanding of the role of the mentor.

Introducing a mentoring component into the JSOM internship requirement has allowed students to learn more about how to approach, and work with a mentor, in addition gaining a better understanding of what it takes to be an effective mentor, which was precisely our intention. We felt that weaving in a mentoring component to the internship requirement would be a good way to introduce students to mentoring and help to eliminate apprehension or anxiety associated with working with a mentor. Mentoring, as a transferable skill, can serve as a differentiator for future business leaders. Introducing students to the basics of mentoring and giving students first-hand experience working with a mentor will hopefully motivate them to continue to build their mentoring skills and to utilize mentors as they enter the workforce.

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MARKETING STRATEGY AND LOGISTICS

NEUTRALIZATION TECHNIQUES AFFECT ON FOR-PROFIT HIGHER EDUCATION EMPLOYEES' INTENTIONS TO STAY

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

For-profit higher education institutions have been scrutinized for alleged violations of state and federal laws, including deceptive recruitment practices, misleading advertising, and financial misconduct (Department of Justice, 2015). While existing literature has explored the ethical dilemmas employees face in such institutions, little attention has been given to their rationale for staying employed (Barber et al., 2023).

The Neutralization Technique theory suggests that individuals can rationalize unethical behaviors through denial, condemnation, and appeal to higher loyalties (Henry, 2009; Matza & Sykes, 1957). These mechanisms allow individuals to deflect self-blame and rationalize behaviors deviating from accepted norms (Maruna & Copes, 2005). However, the extent to which these techniques predict employees' intentions to stay or leave their organization remains unclear.

Corporate culture significantly influences employees' intentions to stay, with recognition of contributions and job satisfaction playing crucial roles (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Additionally, engaging work, professional development opportunities, and managerial honesty impact employees' commitment to their organization (Igbaria et al., 1994; Ghosh et al., 2013; Birt et al., 2004).

For-profit institutions differ notably from not-for-profits, featuring distinct governance structures and faculty requirements (Wisman & Duroy, 2020). Faculty members are often employed on short-term contracts with limited tenure positions, and governance is characterized by minimal faculty control over educational resources. Moreover, faculty requirements vary widely, with some institutions mandating only industry experience while others require graduate degrees.

Preliminary findings from a survey of 150 for-profit higher education employees indicate that financial support and a desire to assist students in achieving academic and career success are primary motivations for remaining employed in such institutions. Female representation was high among the sample, consistent with industry trends, and employment backgrounds varied across admissions, faculty, staff, and management positions.

In conclusion, while for-profit higher education institutions face ethical challenges, employees' decisions to stay are influenced by financial necessity, commitment to students, and organizational culture. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing ethical concerns and improving employee retention in for-profit education. Further analysis of validation techniques is ongoing to elucidate the factors driving employees' intentions to stay.

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DO FEMALE CEOS ACT RESPONSIBLY: ANALYSES OF FEMALE CEO IMPACT ON RELATIONAL CSR

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research exploring the impact of women in the C-suite on strategic marketing choices in general and CSR in particular is scant. To that end, this study explores whether and how firms led by female CEOs differ from those led by male CEOs with regard to the types of CSR. The study divides CSR into two types: rational (product, environment, and corporate governance) and relational CSR (employees, human rights, community, and diversity). To create our sample, we combined four databases: Compustat, Execucomp, Center for Research in Security Prices (CRSP) and Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini and Co., Inc. (KLD). Data for the time period between 1992 and 2013 (both inclusive) were used for the investigation. The final sample comprised of 2,739 firms, for a total of 19,969 firm–year observations (an unbalanced panel). The authors theorize and find evidence that while firms led by male and female CEOs are not significantly different with regard to rational CSR performance, firms led by female CEOs outperform those led by male CEOs with regard to their relational CSR performance. Furthermore, CEO power increases the link between CEO gender and CSR. The authors also find that different types of CEO power (i.e., managerial power, legitimate power, and formal power) moderate the link between CEO gender and CSR differently. This paper shows that the link between CEO gender and CSR is strengthened when CEO power is high, highlighting the importance of considering CEO power as a key moderating factor in upper-echelon related work in general and work exploring the link between CEO factors and CSR in particular. The paper also shows that dividing the variable of CEO power into its sub-types, i.e., managerial power (CEO duality), legitimacy power (CEO tenure) and formal power (CEO pay) has value as each of these power dimensions is found to impact the CEO gender-CSR relationship differently.

E-TAILING AND DIGITAL MARKETING

QUALITY PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABLE LUXURY PRODUCTS: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF HAPTIC INFORMATION

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Sustainability has become an important consideration for many brands and companies (Kunz, My, and Schmidt 2020). Sustainability issues are especially important in the luxury sector, given its widespread reach (Hennigs et al. 2013). Luxury brands face growing tensions driven by consumer activists critiquing them for their lack of supply chain transparency and accusing them of animal and worker exploitation. As such, the luxury sector is slowly recognizing its responsibilities and considering the opportunities related to sustainability in sourcing, manufacturing, and marketing. However, evidence suggests that sustainable luxury products are perceived more negatively and seen as less desirable than regular, non-sustainable luxury products. When considering luxury products, consumers typically associate luxury with quality, as perceived quality of a product reflects consumers' evaluations of the products' overall excellence or superiority. Thus, incorporating sustainability into luxury brands can be damaging if sustainable luxury products are seen as having lower quality than regular luxury products. The present research focuses on how sensory cues can signal quality perceptions and lower concerns about the luxurious feel/experience of sustainable materials used in luxury products. The sensory component of product experience is an important aspect of a luxury product and its associated retail strategy (Wiedman et al. 2013). Consequently, to address consumers' perception of sustainable luxury products, it would be pertinent to stimulate their sensory organs (i.e., eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin) as relevant to the product. To that end, the present research aims to examine the role of sensory cues to stimulate consumers' senses. Specifically, we focus on the sense of touch or haptics. In the context of luxury products, the tactile perception elements are crucial (Wiedman et al. 2013). This is especially important when customers are faced with sustainable materials (such as recycled plastic and re-purposed or unconventional material) used in the production of luxury products. However, in contrast to vision, auditory, and olfactory cues, which might be perceived while a product is at a distance, tactile exchanges occur when one can touch and manipulate objects. As such, the present research examines whether consumers' quality and luxury perceptions of products vary when they are provided with the chance to touch and feel the materials used in luxury products.

Study 1 was a field experiment in which participants were shown images and product details of a luxury backpack and were told that the luxury brand is using genuine leather (vs. vegan leather) made of calf (vs. cactus). The product details including price were kept constant across conditions. Next, participants were given a sample of the fabric and were told that the sample belongs to the same calf leather (vs. cactus leather) used in producing the backpack. They were asked to touch and examine the material and answer questions that captured their perceptions of the product's haptics attributes as well as its quality and luxury perceptions. The results indicated that when consumers are provided with the opportunity to experience the sensory attributes of the sustainable materials used in luxury products, not only their quality concerns are addressed, but they may even develop more favorable perceptions about the sustainable luxury products. The second study was a 2 (luxury product: sustainable vs. unsustainable) x 2 product description (haptically focused vs. not focused) which examined consumer perceptions and purchase behaviors towards a sustainable luxury product (backpack) in an online shopping context and examined the strategic role of providing haptically relevant messaging (product touch and feel descriptions) for such products when actual touch is not possible. We expected that the inclusion of sensory information will lower quality concerns about the sustainable materials used in luxury products, enhance the sustainable luxury products' perceived quality, and positively affect consumers' overall evaluations of the sustainable version of the luxury product as reflected by increased purchase intention and purchase confidence. The results supported our expectations.

The results contribute to accessibility (Feldman and Lynch 1988) and availability (Kisielius and Sternthal 1984) theories, suggesting that individuals elaborate upon incoming environmental information by relating the information to previously stored, activated information. According to these theories, two characteristics of information affect consumers' judgment and behavior. First, the valence of information refers to whether the environmental information and/or the information retrieved from memory is positive, negative, or neutral. The second characteristic of information is diagnosticity or the degree to which the information is helpful in categorizing (i.e., high quality, low quality) or interpreting the product. Our results show that the availability of haptic cues directly (when the material is touched) or indirectly (when a haptic description of the material is provided) can help with valence (i.e., if the sensory experience is positive) and diagnositicy (i.e., if the sensory experience helps with quality assessment) and thus, affects perceived quality and downstream consumer responses. The results also contribute to sustainable luxury research by linking this stream of research with sensory marketing and are expected to have significant implications for marketers and sustainable luxury brands.

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INVESTIGATING HOW PRIVACY CONCERNS, TRUST AND RISK IMPACT CONSUMERS' PRIVACY POLICY KNOWLEDGE AND PRIVACY PROTECTION BEHAVIORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The advancements of information technologies, most notably, the increasing use of social media and social networks, have exacerbated users' privacy concerns, which are defined as the concerns regarding a firm's practices relating to the collection and use of consumers' personal information (Son & Kim, 2008). A Pew survey discovered that the majority of adults in the U.S. are concerned about how organizations and businesses protect their personal information (Auxier et al., 2019). The privacy standards set by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), namely the Fair Information Practices (FIP) principles, provide the core guidelines for companies to develop their privacy policies. FTC relies on two privacy-protection approaches: the notice-and-choice model and the harms-based model (Ohlhausen, 2014). Under the notice-and-choice model, firms are required to inform users upfront of firms' information practices and provide users with choices so that users can make informed decisions of whether to permit firms to collect data about them. One main criticism of this approach is that firms often write lengthy privacy policies in legal terms that are difficult to understand, and it imposes a heavy burden on users to read them (Milne, Culnan & Greene 2006). Since privacy policies serve as a contract between users and firms, it is in the users' best interest to read them to understand what firms' privacy practices are, what their choices are, and what actions are taken by firms to protect data collected about them. Even though companies are doing better in informing consumers what data are collected, how the collected data will be used and shared within the companies and with third parties, and what choices they have in limiting data access and sharing, most people just skip reading privacy policies when presented (Obar & Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2020). From all parties' perspectives, users, social media companies and policy makers, it is important to understand how much users know about what is usually stated in a privacy policy and firms' privacy practices. This study examines a user's privacy concerns, their knowledge of firms' privacy policies, their trust in the social media firms, their perceptions of risk regarding social media sites and their privacy protection behaviors.

Users enjoy the ability to use social networking sites and apps. However, membership and usage of social media platforms presents a dilemma of privacy concerns for individuals. On one hand, users benefit from sharing, engaging and posting information on social networking sites. On the other hand, they might be concerned about relinquishing privacy by disclosing personal information (Hayes et al., 2021). This research draws on Privacy Calculus Theory (PCT) to examine the relationships between users' privacy concerns, trust, perceptions of risk, privacy policy knowledge and privacy protection behaviors. PCT explains the possible benefits versus the

perceived risks of information disclosure and how individuals cognitively grapple with this dilemma (Laufer & Wolfe, 1977). Furthermore, PCT posits that logical reasoning explains users' attitudes, behaviors and intentions to use information technology given the perceived privacy threat (Keith et al., 2013). In line with PCT, the following hypotheses are proposed: H1 An individual's privacy concerns are positively associated with their knowledge of the privacy policies; H2 An individual's trust is positively associated with their knowledge of the privacy policies; H3 An individual's risk perceptions are negatively associated with their knowledge of the privacy policies and H4 An individual's knowledge of the privacy policies is positively associated with their privacy protection behaviors.

This study used cross-sectional data to test the hypotheses. The data were collected with the assistance of a market research agency (Dynata) to recruit respondents. Structural equations modeling (AMOS 29) was used to analyze the 685 responses. Questionnaire items were adopted and adapted from previously-validated scales (Hong & Thong, 2013; Son & Kim, 2008). An exploratory factor analysis was first completed. Then the data was analyzed using structural equations modeling. For both the confirmatory factor and structural model analyses, the models fit the data well. The path coefficients were examined for hypotheses testing. H1, H2 and H4 were supported (p<0.001). H3 was not supported (p=0.165). The research model included mediation relationships, which were tested. Privacy policy knowledge fully mediates the relationships: 1) privacy concerns to privacy policy knowledge to privacy protection behaviors and 2) trust to privacy policy knowledge to privacy protection behaviors.

The current study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, this research integrated PCT with users' privacy concerns, trust, perceived risk and privacy protection behaviors on social media sites. Second, this study is the first to examine the gap in the literature about how an individual's knowledge of privacy policies is affected by their privacy concerns, trust in the social media site and perceptions of risk. Lastly, the findings of this present research indicate that privacy concerns and trust are linked to more knowledge of the social networking sites' privacy policies, which in turn is associated with more privacy protection behaviors. For practitioners, the current study's findings indicate that users' privacy protection behaviors increase with more knowledge of the privacy policy, which is linked to more privacy concerns. In line with the original hypothesis, individuals who take the time to gain more knowledge may be even more critical of social media firms' practices regarding the use of consumer data. This in turn impacts users' privacy protection behaviors and means they are more likely to engage in actions such as removing information, supplying fake personal details and restricting access. This means social networking companies should endeavor to reassure users through transparent information when it comes to how they use, share and sell data.

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CONTENT STRATEGIES FOR MILLENNIAL MOMS AS A TOOL FOR ENGAGEMENT AND SENSE OF BELONGING: THE LIVING_HOME CASE

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ABSTRACT

This case study describes the efforts of the Living home to deliver valuable content to millennial moms across its multiple online platforms. The paper discusses key components of delivering a valuable digital experience, and resulting performance improvements based on metrics such as online engagement and revenue from brands whose target segment is nurturing moms from the millennial generation. It also addresses key brand benefits and challenges, offering insight into learning since launch. The paper concludes with an insight into how Living_home has managed to expand internationally through differentiation.

Keywords: marketing, consumer behavior, digital marketing, content marketing, predictive analytics, social listening

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2019 impacted the world in numerous ways. Some companies adopted marketing initiatives with innovative content marketing. These companies achieved accelerated their growth and became successful. Engagement with consumers through innovative content marketing increased awareness, and resulted in a high rate of return as well.

Even though many online users were not familiar with learning, shopping, and engaging digitally, the world changed in the face of lockdowns, impacting online behavior. Especially for mothers with young children, who were involved with an increasing burden of care-giving responsibilities during the pandemic, there was at least one silver lining.

Mothers who were unwittingly drawn into the digital arena during the lockdown are now the ones who value accessing and engaging content that solves issues in their daily lives, particularly in regard to young children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of social media by the millennial generation explains its impact on consumer behavior, business, and society (e.g., Bolton et al, 2013). Mothers belonging to this generation represent one of the most important consumer groups to take into account in marketing, so understanding their digital behavior is vital to reach them with attractive content, in the right format, on the right platforms, and in the right spaces. Companies that target this demographic have been able to design strategies, promotions, sweepstakes, contests, launches, advertising campaigns, and actions with influencers aimed at this market niche. This captive segment of moms wants to offer quality time to their children. At least one study (Paulene and Sedevna, 2019) evidenced that recommendations on social media impact purchase intention. Electronic word-of-mouth continues to be crucial, pointing to the importance of Brand communities in motivating consumers Access as well as provide their experiences, across a range of platforms.

Much of recent marketing effort has been focused, not only on satisfying these customers, but also on creating viral content strategies that the community shares on their own social networks, resulting in organic growth." Viral marketing takes the form of an email or a video posted to a personal blog and passed to other blogs or websites such as YouTube" Clow and Baack, 2018). In this way, it becomes a virtual circle of recommending good content to new moms and working moms who do not have the time to come up with new activities that promote development and values through play.

A characteristic that differentiates the development of interesting content in a hyper-communicated world is social listening. "Marketers listen to the interactions, or social conversations, and use the information gathered to generate more buzz for their products within social networks" (Schiffman, L., and L. Kanuk, 2010). Also, "Social listening, or listening to social chatter, often provides enlightening information to marketing professionals" (Clow and Baack, 2018). This dynamic has become more complex today; further, it is also a determining factor for communication strategies and content developed specifically for markets such as women and millennial moms (Curran, Treiber, and Rosenblatt, 2018, Jani, Dougherty, and Martha2021).

Habits of millennial moms: For millennials, there was a marked change in the conception of their free time pre- and post-pandemic: before the lockdown, young adults preferred open spaces for recreation, a situation that underwent marked changes during the pandemic. Further, although mobility restrictions have been slowly relaxing, the idea of enclosed spaces persists. Millennial moms are looking for spaces to satisfy their own and their families' needs for social connection and entertainment. It is in this area that they make use of video calling tools, take advantage of music or radio streaming services and also on-demand content, particularly TV shows and free movies.

Millennial moms count on devices as their best allies to help simplify their lives and optimize their time so they can engage in work, cook, organize, exercise, manage household finances, make payments, commute, travel, and banking. The truth is that the new "connected" moms take advantage of new technologies to redefine their role by embracing connectivity. They are highly receptive to taking charge of situations; they are very independent and critical, so they have a high need for connection.

"I can leave my house without a purse, but without a cell phone and makeup, never."
- Mom 32, participant in NX Digital Consumption Habits Study, 2023

Thus, they find moments to be present on the network practically all day long; from routine presence in social networks, to the increase of remote work and the growing need to know what is happening day by day, up to the minute, which has generated exaggerated connection behaviors.

One of the main focuses of attention for these moms is their children's development. Without leaving home, they seek out parenting content, frequently asked questions, and activities that favor child development.

Ethics and morals play a fundamental role in the purchasing decisions of Latin American millennials, who fight to stop the consequences of climate change and bet on changing consumption habits and circular economy, supporting local trade. On the other hand, they give preference to products and services recognized for being socially and environmentally responsible. According to a generational consumer study, millennials give priority to platforms that help them create more professional and parenting communities. They use platforms that protect their privacy and data protection (LLYC Ideas, 2022). Millennials are the largest economically active population in the Latin American region and the pandemic brought them many challenges for which they were not prepared. However, they have been able to adapt to change by forging new habits and prioritizing areas they were neglecting such as mental health, family and savings/investment.

Social Listening Companies that offer valuable content have not only benefited from attracting more customers but have also been able to conduct market research strategies to increase the return on investment. Social listening allows the company to monitor social networks with a strategic purpose. In this case, the company "listens" to users on a wide variety of channels and evaluates the sentiment in relation to the brand and the competition. The idea is to understand what catches the target market’s attention, as well as how to identify opportunities and areas of improvement.

These "clues" are also inserted into the general context of the market, relating to mentions of the brand, as well as recent trends and events. Predictive analysis is used as a foundation in formulating strategies and tactics to improve customer service.

The strategy has been focused on studying the right hashtags to attract the target audience to their sites and thus enhance their content. How do they do it? They use digital spaces to build and participate in communities of mothers, where they seek and provide answers to common questions and concerns about parenting and home economics, this are sought by millennials moms. It is important to have a sought by seamless integration of market research and content marketing to exploit the full potential of focused strategies to enhance the customer experience.

Social listening goes beyond social networks. The most relevant spaces for online interaction are platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram that allow marketers to listen to discussions about brands in the target market. This social listening offers textual comments and the volume of conversation generated around a brand. Additionally, it provides access to the user’s profile, the emotion generated by the post, content posted by competitors, and active monitoring of market leaders.

It is important to monitor social networks as a reactive practice: customers interact with the platforms and the brand responds. Finally, metrics such as number of mentions and engagement rate are the focus of monitoring. The quality of interactions - whether the buzz is positive or negative - is a subsequent analysis, which often serves to proactively anticipate crises, and optimize promotional campaigns.

LIVING_HOME

Living_home was born in Mexico in 2013 as an entrepreneurship plan, where its founder wanted to leverage her experience with technology and communication companies. As an entrepreneur and mother of three children, her dream was to start her own company. Her passion for children's development led her to start with ideas around this theme, in order to start her content generation company. The first step was to open her YouTube channel to shape children’s habits and manners through games and activities that featured her own characters. Although the videos were popular and catchy, they did not yield expected results. Like any start-up business, there was a need to experiment with new ways of engaging with customers.

The next move was in 2016 with content creation that targeted the moms of the children that formed the earlier audience. For the first time, Facebook introduced uploading of video. Interesting videos were developed and released, received with a high degree of acceptance. At the beginning, the content was focused on crafts for moms. Later on, "hand- made" contents were directed to the nice of certified experts in respectful parenting, and equity in parenting. This proved a decisive factor in giving a more interesting twist to the brand. It lent credibility and attractiveness to the brand.

Faced with its growth, as well as demand for more content in 2017, Living_home positioned itself with partner brands aimed at moms with children from up to 7 years old. The company diversified into a new area, through development of content for prestigious brands such as Kipling and Piguin. A year later, they increased revenues through content on the Instagram platform.

These platforms allowed to connect with the tribe of moms between 25 and 35 years old, as a space for exercise, makeup, humorous phrases about motherhood, videos of crafts for children, meanings of baby names, mother-child charts and conversations related to parenting. In addition to this valuable content, online courses were launched where moms could learn about parenting issues through online courses and digital workshops on WhatsApp, both of which helped in snowballing, generating leads and larger databases, which also facilitated a new element - data mining.

Living_home is recognized among the most important digital influencers in Mexico. Its international expansion into the Hispanic and Latino sub-segment in the U.S. market as well as Latin American countries has significantly expanded its target audience. The experience in this specific market has positioned Living_home as a leading content developer catering to millennial moms in this niche market across a larger geographical market. With growth, the company continues to evolve, particularly with a new focus on corporate social responsibility. Living_home is expanding its business model, speaking to specific issues such as emotional support in parenting. Additionally, a new project was initiated to develop a market research business initiative called “Recycling for a Better World”. This initiative adds value to company through the understanding of the women's market and specifically millennial moms. The initiative strengthened the position of Living_home in the eco-friendly market niche, gaining a strategic advantage over competing market research agencies.

KEY LESSONS

- Focus on a specific niche: Instead of trying to cater to a broad audience, it is important to identify and target a specific niche market. By understanding the unique needs and preferences of this niche, you can tailor your marketing efforts to effectively reach and engage with them.

- Generate valuable content: Create content that provides value to your target audience. This could be in the form of child development information, practical tips, entertaining stories, or insightful perspectives. Valuable content not only attracts and retains the attention of your audience but also positions your brand as a trusted resource.

- Generate experiences: Beyond just providing information, aim to create memorable experiences for your audience. This could involve interactive campaigns, virtual events, gamification, or personalized interactions. By offering engaging experiences, you can foster deeper connections and enhance brand loyalty.

- Focus efforts on listening through social listening: Actively listen to your audience - monitor conversations, gather feedback, and analyze consumer sentiment to gain insights into their needs, preferences, and pain points. This information feeds into your content strategy, product development, and overall marketing approach.

- Generate a sense of belonging: Cultivate a sense of community and belonging among your target audience. Encourage participation, facilitate discussions, and create platforms for them to connect and engage with each other. When individuals feel connected to a community that shares their interests, they are more likely to stay engaged with your brand.

- Capitalize on partnerships with other brands: Collaborate with complementary brands or influencers to expand your reach and tap into new audiences. Strategic partnerships can help you leverage each other's strengths and resources and provide opportunities for cross-promotion and co-creation of content or experiences.

- Enhance your return on investment (ROI): While implementing marketing initiatives, ensure that you track and measure your (ROI). Set clear goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) for each campaign or activity, and regularly assess their effectiveness. By understanding which efforts yield the best results, you can allocate resources wisely and optimize your marketing strategies for maximum ROI.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Focusing on a specific niche allows businesses to tailor their marketing efforts to a target audience with specific needs and preferences. This increases the chances of effectively reaching and engaging with potential customers. Generating valuable content is crucial for attracting and retaining the attention of the target audience. By providing information, tips, or entertainment that addresses their needs and interests, businesses can position themselves as valuable resources and build trust with their audience. Creating meaningful experiences for customers goes beyond providing information. By engaging them through interactive campaigns, events, or personalized interactions, businesses can create memorable moments that strengthen brand loyalty and foster deeper connections. Social listening plays a crucial role in understanding the needs, preferences, and sentiments of the target audience. By actively monitoring conversations and gathering feedback through social media, businesses can gain valuable insights that inform their marketing strategies and help them better serve their customers.

Building a sense of belonging among the target audience can significantly enhance customer loyalty. By facilitating discussions, encouraging participation, and creating a community around shared interests, businesses can foster a sense of connection and make customers feel valued and included. Collaborating with other brands or influencers opens opportunities to reach new audiences and leverage each other's resources. By forming strategic partnerships, businesses can expand their reach and tap into new customer segments, creating mutually beneficial relationships. Carefully monitoring and optimizing return on investment (ROI) is essential for ensuring marketing efforts are effective and efficient. By setting clear goals, tracking performance, and regularly assessing the outcomes of marketing initiatives, businesses can allocate resources wisely and optimize their strategies to achieve the highest possible return on their investments.

Directions for future research: Survey research would help in understanding specific aspects of the consumer behavior of millennium moms, such as motivation, personality, attitudes, and learning in context of online content. Cross-cultural studies may unmask differences between the Hispanic and Latino markets in the USA, Mexico, and Latin American countries. Such studies would aid in creating and extending knowledge of content marketing for the benefit of researchers, professionals, as well as students.

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SMALL TALK IS KEY TO CONNECTING THE DOTS! ESTABLISHING THE EFFECT OF B2B SALESPERSON SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON CREATIVE AND SALES PERFORMANCE THROUGH SMALL TALK

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Social media is an ever-evolving dynamic powerhouse, serving as an indispensable resource around the clock amidst the intricate and non-linear landscape of B2B sales. It plays a pivotal role beyond mere lead identification and comprehending potential clientele to encompass seamless information exchange and fostering relationships with modern B2B buyers, unlike the traditional sales techniques (Agnihotri, 2020; Agnihotri, Dingus, Hu, and Krush 2016; Chaker, Nowlin, Pivonka, Itani, and Agnihotri 2022). Over the past two decades, extensive research has investigated the impact of social media technology within the B2B landscape. Social media has been widely recognized as a primary tool for acquiring business information and facilitating communication between buyers and sellers; however, a benefit of social media that has often been overlooked in sales literature is its capacity to identify customers' backgrounds, opinions, interests, common friends, affiliations, and shared activities. These commonalities provide abundant opportunities for initiating small talk and strengthening customer connections (Kaski, Niemi, and Pullins, 2018; Wiener, Flaherty, and Wiener, 2023).

Small talk is integral to relational communication skills, constituting a pivotal dimension of the behavioral communication dimension of sales communication competence in B2B solution selling (Koponen, Julkunen, and Asai 2019). Fine (2004) astutely noted that while one may negotiate contracts, deliver effective presentations, and sell products or services, developing business friendships hinges on incorporating small talk. In the realm of B2B sales, successful salespeople adeptly create enjoyable interactions with customers through non-business conversations (small talk), yielding outcomes ranging from pleasant exchanges to securing lucrative business deals worth millions. Despite the ubiquity of small talk in sales interactions, it remains a highly under-researched topic. Hence, our study addresses the aforementioned research gap and delves into how B2B sales professionals can leverage social media to create meaningful and engaging small talk with buyers for enhanced sales performance.

In this study, we employ the Similarity-Attraction and Task Technology Fit theories to develop a theoretical framework and examine how a B2B salesperson's social media usage indirectly influences sales performance through small talk. We conducted two empirical studies, drawing data from multiple sources to examine our model. The first study involved a structured survey with data gathered from 276 B2B salespeople working in multi-industry, while the second utilized a vignette-based survey, gathering insights from 41 sales leaders and 30 industrial buyers

across India. This research represents a pioneering endeavor in B2B sales, providing unique evidence of how technology utilization fosters interpersonal connections, yielding tangible outcomes in both creative and sales performance.

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SERVICES MARKETING

RELATIONS OF CO-CREATION AND CORE EXPERIENCE INDUSTRY STRATEGIES ON EXPERIENCE VALUE-DURING-USE AND EXPERIENCE VALUE-AFTER-USE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of experience industry strategies and co-creation frameworks on experience value-during-use and experience value-after-use in leisure settings. Analyzing 482 experience observations from college students, we found significant associations were found between certain strategies (e.g., theming, personalization) and both experience value-during-use and value-after-use. Findings underscore the importance of these factors in shaping consumer experiences and provide actionable insights for marketers and managers in enhancing consumer engagement and satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars and professionals in marketing, tourism, sports, entertainment, and leisure have a longstanding interest in the value of immediate conscious experiences of consumers. Models of valued immediate conscious experiences during consumption or participation (experience value-during-use; VDU) have been advanced, examples of which are flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), engagement, immersion, and absorption (Ellis et al., 2019; Pine & Gilmore, 2021). Flow and enjoyment refer to states of heightened consciousness applicable to a broad range of experience contexts, whereas the latter three of these define experiences occurring during specific circumstances: unfolding stories (engagement), participating in performances and creative production (immersion), and focusing on sensory stimuli (absorption). Experience value-after-use (VAU) is also of interest. VAU refers to value occurring after service and experience encounters have concluded, examples of which are proclivity to recommend, satisfaction with time spent, and perceived value of time spent. Quality experiences are characterized by high levels of VDU, which are assumed to yield high levels of VAU.

Potential determinants of these experience values are also of considerable interest to both scholars and professionals (Rossman & Duerden, 2019), and models of potential determinants of VDU and VAU have been advanced. Two sets of these determinants are the experience industry strategies identified by Pine and Gilmore (2021) and co-creation (e.g., Lacanienta & Duerden, 2019). The experience industry strategies include theming, multisensory embellishments, personalization, and memorabilia. Co-creation, involving the consumer in the production and execution of services and experiences, is also important. These factors have not been studied in-situ as a part of the experience journeys of visitors to various travel, entertainment, sport, and leisure venues. Our study, then, examined the relations between potential experience-industry and co-creation determinants (i.e., theming, personalization, multisensory experiences, co-creation/co-design, co-creation/co-actualization) and VDU and VAU of visitors to a wide range of venues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Among marketing scholars, interest in the immediate experience of consumption dates at least to 1983, when Hirschman and Holbrook published their seminal paper, "The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun." The authors proposed that consumption has symbolic, hedonic, and esthetic elements and is often directed toward "pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun" (p. 132). The centrality of experience was popularized in 1999 with publication of Pine and Gilmore's *The Experience Economy*. Pine and Gilmore argue that immediate human experiences (such as fantasies, feelings, and fun) define an entire segment of the economy; unique features clearly distinguish between the traditional classification of economic offerings into commodities, products, and services. Pine and Gilmore also identified a clear set of strategies managers and marketers may use to experientialize goods and services or to elevate the immediate conscious experiences of consumers engaged in sports, arts, leisure and entertainment. The techniques they identified include theming, personalization, adding multisensory elements, and providing an unanticipated value-added take-away (memorabilia). Despite the explosion of interest in experiences following publication of Pine and Gilmore's book (see Rossman & Duerden, 2019; Hunnicutt, 2020), limited research has investigated the efficacy of these techniques in elevating the experience value of consumers.

A related development in marketing experiences was the introduction of the concept of co-creation by Lovelock and Young (1979), who pointed out the potential value that could be created by involving customers in the production and consumption process. Bitner et al. (1997) distinguished among three levels of consumer participation: customer presence in service delivery, customer inputs, and full role as co-producer of products or services. Based on contributions by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) and Rossman and Schlatter (2015), Duerden and his colleagues (2019) defined co-creation as "active participation, dialogue, and collaboration between participants, producers, and a variety of other stakeholders throughout the process of designing, participating in, and reflecting on an experience" (p. 118). They defined co-creation across three phases of an experience. *Co-design* occurs during the anticipation phase, *co-actualization* occurs during actual participation, yielding experience-value-during use, and *co-curation* occurs during reflection, yielding experience value-after-use.

Despite the widespread interest in immediate experiences among scholars in marketing, tourism, sport, leisure studies, and other disciplines, limited research has directly tested relations between experience industry strategies proposed by Pine and Gilmore (2021) and the co-creation framework advanced by Lacanienta and Duerden (2019). Some studies have examined the effects of individual components such as theming (Åstrøm, 2020; Lacanienta et al., 2018), yet the components co-occur during real-life experiences. Only one study (Taggart et al., 2019) has combined the entire set of experience industry strategies into a coherent whole, and that study was conducted in the context of camp experiences for youth. Camp activities were systematically structured for presence and absence of theme, personalization, and multisensory embellishment. No previous study has examined the presumed causes and effects naturally occurring, in-situ, as part of the lived experience of guests. We tested hypotheses that theme, multisensory embellishments, personalization, co-design, and co-actualization increase VDU and VAU.

METHOD

Experience observations (n = 482) were collected from students in a college of business class at a faith-based university in the Western United States. Data were collected through an assignment in which students chose on-campus or community experience venues, participated in activities at those venues, and then completed questionnaires measuring provider use of experience industry strategies, co-creation, and experience value. Venues and activities were broad in scope and paralleled popular experiences of tourists in that community.

Immediately upon exit, students completed an electronic questionnaire designed to measure the study variables. Experience-industry predictors were theming, multisensory embellishments, and personalization. Two questions addressed theming. One of these asked students to indicate the type of theming most evident at the venue: a motif, a theme implying a journey, or a theme implying an overarching idea. The other question measured pervasiveness of that theme, asking students to “evaluate the provider’s performance in providing a pervasive theme.” Multisensory embellishment performance was measured by asking students to evaluate the experience provider’s performance in providing multisensory embellishments and a similar question measured personalization of the guest’s experience. The response format was a slider scale with response options ranging from 0-100, formatted as a labeled magnitude scale (e.g., Schutz & Cardello, 2001). Co-creation was measured with two questions, one asking the students to estimate the extent to which they co-designed the experience (co-creation before the activity) and the other asked students to indicate the extent to which they co-actualized the activity (co-creation during the activity). A 101-slider scale was used for responses, anchored with “not at all” (0) and “extensively” (100).

Value-during-use measures included engagement (in story experiences), immersion (in performance experiences), absorption (in sensory experiences), prevalence of deep experience, and enjoyment. These terms were defined, and a labeled magnitude slider scale was used for responses. For value-after-use, we measured proclivity to recommend (e.g., Jiang et al., 2022), satisfaction with time spent, and perceived value of time spent.

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

We used confirmatory factor analysis to create measures of experience VDU and experience VAU. The former of these was comprised of measures of in-situ engagement, immersion, absorption, enjoyment, and prevalence of deep experience during the visit. Standardized coefficients were strong, ranging from .515 to .684. AVE was .392, and composite reliability (coefficient omega) was .761. Fit indices were very good (χ^2 = 3.07, p = .546; NFI = .994, CFI = 1.0, IFI = 1.0, RMSEA < .001). The measurement model for experience VAU showed acceptable fit. The components were proclivity to recommend, satisfaction with time spent, and perceived value of time spent. Standardized coefficients ranged from .617 to .804. AVE was .538, composite reliability (coefficient omega) was .874, and key fit indices indicated a very good fit (χ^2 = 8.26, p = .31; NFI = .994, CFI = .999, IFI = .999, RMSEA = .019).

VDU and VAU were regressed on the set of experience industry predictors, co-design, and co-actualization, in separate models. For the VDU model, all of the experience industry and co-creation variables were significant except multisensory embellishment. VDU was significantly higher for the motif theme (M = 45.04) compared to the journey theme (M = 41.82). In the VAU model, co-design and personalization were also nonsignificant. VAU was significantly higher for the motif theme (M = 96.38) compared to the journey theme (M = 92.60).

DISCUSSION

We evaluated experience industry and co-creation strategies for value-during-use and value-after-use. For value-during-use, all predictors were significant except multisensory embellishments. For value-after-use, two additional predictors, co-design and personalization, were nonsignificant. Results have implications for future inquiry and for marketing of travel, entertainment, and leisure services.

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MEDICAL TOURISM: DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LEADING DESTINATIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEM

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research examines the perceptions of American consumers regarding some of the top medical tourism destinations and how that influences their attitudes towards medical tourism overall. It also looks into their intentions regarding medical tourism. This research looks into the five countries: India, Brazil, Thailand, Malaysia, and Mexico, and how potential consumers ranked them on certain key criteria. The criteria were quality of medical care, safety & security, affordable prices, attractiveness as a tourism destination, hygiene level, and accessibility. The expectation is that criteria such as quality of medical care would have more of an impact on overall attitudes than others such as attractiveness as a tourism destination. This research aims to confirm those expectations and also the impact of other criteria on attitudes and intentions.

Research Methodology:

An online questionnaire was designed and distributed to 537 students at a state university in Texas, USA. The students were enrolled in online graduate and undergraduate level classes and showed a diversity of age, race, and income. About 24% of the respondents were in the 18-24 years age group, 41% in the 25-34 years group, 21% in the 35-44 years group, 7% in the 45-54 years group, 4% in the 65-74 years group and 3% were in the 75 years and above age group. 37% of the respondents were male, 62% were female and less than 1% identified as non-binary/other. 484 respondents completed the survey.

Findings:

Even as medical tourism grows in popularity, many consumers are reluctant to consider it as an option. This research looked into perceptions of American consumers regarding five countries. It was found that overall, most respondents believed that finding high quality medical care overseas could be worth the search and important. However, they also were reluctant to accept that medical care overseas could be trustworthy or more competent than what they would receive in the USA. Majority of the respondents did believe that going overseas for medical care could be a bargain. When it came down to individual country perceptions, Mexico led the other countries regarding accessibility. When it came to perceived hygiene levels, none of the 5 countries received high scores. Respondents were also asked about their perceptions regarding attractiveness as a tourism destination and here, Thailand and Brazil were seen as almost equally attractive with Thailand having a slight advantage. Next, they were asked about their perceptions about prices and here, Mexico had a clear advantage. When they were asked about safety and security, all the 5 countries were assigned low scores. Again, when it came to quality medical care, respondents did not seem

to have great confidence in any of the 5 countries and most of them answered ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

Implications:

The findings indicate that most of the respondents, even while being open minded about the idea of medical tourism, had concerns. While they agreed that getting medical treatment overseas could lead to savings and also result in a vacation, the biggest fear they expressed was about uncertainty of the quality of medical care. Safety and security was the second most cited issue. When it comes to medical care, most respondents considered quality of medical care to be the top-rated deciding factor and if they did not feel confident about that, there is a high chance that the resulting savings will not sway their decision. This indicates that these 5 countries have a significant amount of work before them when it comes to managing perceptions regarding quality of medical care, safety and security, hygiene, and accessibility.

Limitations:

An overwhelming 89.54 percent of the respondents had medical insurance coverage. This could have influenced their responses and made medical tourism appear less desirable than it would be to someone with no coverage. Furthermore, most of them were also mostly satisfied with their insurance coverage. Given that medical tourism is most appealing to uninsured or underinsured consumers, this research may present different findings if those demographics were surveyed.

STUDENT RESEARCH

FACTORS THAT SET CELEBRITIES APART FROM OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Using celebrities to endorse products is a popular marketing tactic that aims to transfer the positive image and traits of the celebrity onto the brand, ultimately influencing consumers' decisions to buy or use the endorsed product (Schouten et al., 2021). Celebrities are now seen as human brands, not just individuals, playing roles as brand promoters, company spokespersons, and even potential partners (Saldanha et al., 2020). According to Euromonitor International (2014), approximately 25% of advertisements in the USA feature celebrities, while in Germany, the figure is around 16%. In contrast, in South Korea and Japan, this percentage can soar to as high as 70%. Besides the usual celebrities like actors and athletes, companies are also leaning towards social media influencers, often called 'micro-celebrities' such as vloggers and 'Instafamous' personalities, to endorse their brands (Marwick, 2015; Jin et al., 2019).

Social media influencers are individuals who share their personal experiences and opinions about products and services online (Khamis et al., 2017; Masuda et al., 2022). Unlike traditional celebrities who gain fame for their professional talents, social media influencers, or simply 'influencers', become well-known by establishing themselves as authorities on various topics through platforms like Instagram and YouTube (Khamis et al., 2017; Schouten et al. 2021). These users share self-created content on subjects like beauty, fitness, food, and fashion, amassing large followings and turning their online presence into a primary profession, such as being a 'fashion blogger' or 'fitness enthusiast' (Lin et al., 2018). The use of influencers in brand-paid endorsements gave rise to so-called influencer 'marketing' (Martínez-López et al., 2020; Ahn, 2022). Influencer marketing has evolved into a powerful tool for influencing consumer behavior. Currently valued at approximately $13.8 billion, influencer marketing is a rapidly growing industry (Leung et al., 2022). Notably, two-thirds of companies increased their budgets for influencer marketing in 2021, and 80% of surveyed companies plan to allocate at least 10% of their marketing budgets to this strategy (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Almost 60% of brands utilize influencer marketing to achieve their communication goals on social media platforms (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022).

These statistics highlight the pivotal role of influencer marketing in enhancing consumer engagement for companies and brands.

Given the increasing importance of influencer marketing, it becomes critical to distinguish between traditional celebrities and social media influencers — the main drivers of influencer marketing (Leung et al., 2022). In research and media, there is a blurred distinction between celebrities and social media influencers, which can lead to confusion and potential inefficiencies for companies when selecting endorsers that align with their budget and promotional objectives. Thus, in the world of influencer marketing, a perplexing puzzle remains: what differentiates celebrities and influencers? The current study addresses this significant research gap and identifies factors that set celebrities apart from social media influencers who did not attain celebrity status.

In our pursuit to highlight factors distinguishing celebrities, a thorough examination of 19 interconnected items was undertaken through Principal Axis Factoring with Oblimin rotation, a technique chosen to account for correlated factors, starting with an initial pool of 364 observations. Rigorous screening, based on attention checks and English proficiency, led to 211 valid responses. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure attested to the adequacy of sampling (KMO = .730), and individual item measures exceeded the acceptable threshold of .5. Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .05$) affirmed significant correlations among variables. Based on eigenvalues and Kaiser's criterion, six factors with eigenvalues above 1, and one close to 1, emerged, collectively explaining 67% of the variance. Factor loadings, mostly surpassing ±.50, were deemed practically significant.

These factors were identified as emotional bond, relational asymmetry, attractiveness based on ability, attractiveness based on appearance, attractiveness based on personality, recognizability, and aspirational entertainment. Each factor was delineated by its distinct characteristics. Emotional bond encapsulates the personal connection and attachment individuals feel towards celebrities. Relational asymmetry highlights the one-sided nature of celebrity-fan relationships. Attractiveness based on ability underscores the unique talents that set celebrities apart, while attractiveness based on appearance emphasizes their enhanced physical allure. Attractiveness based on personality encompasses both charismatic traits and philanthropic endeavors. Recognizability denotes the widespread familiarity of celebrities, and aspiration underscores their role model status in aspiring to professional and personal goals.

Subsequently, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to fine-tune the model, resulting in five retained factors: emotional bond (EB), relational asymmetry (RA), attractiveness based on ability (ABA), attractiveness based on personality (ABP), and attractiveness based on physical appearance (ABPA). This refined model exhibited significant statistical validity ($p = 0.008$) and met established criteria for a good fit. While EB and ABP demonstrated both convergent and discriminant validity, ABPA fell short in construct validity due to low factor loadings. In light of these findings, we recommend a data recollection with revised instruments, while emphasizing the pivotal role of attraction forms (Ability and Personality), relational asymmetry, and emotional bonding in shaping celebrity status.

The research findings offer valuable insights for marketing and brands. By understanding the key elements that contribute to a celebrity or influencer's appeal, brands can strategically select endorsements and develop campaigns that resonate with their target audience. This knowledge enables brands to create authentic connections, position products effectively, and measure campaign success based on specific factors.

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FACTORS AFFECTING INTENTIONS TO PURCHASE VEGAN COSMETICS: A STIMULUS-ORGANISM-RESPONSIVE PERSPECTIVE

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Cosmetic products have been used for thousands of years, with their use tracing back to ancient times, including Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations (Kumar et al., 2006). In 2022, the overall beauty market generated approximately $430 billion in revenue, and the global beauty market has experienced an average compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.5% over the past 20 years (Łopaciuk & Łoboda, 2013). Overall, beauty remains a thriving industry that appeals to various stakeholders, from top-tier investors to top celebrities. Despite the growth and popularity, the cosmetic industry has received significant criticism from consumer groups. These criticisms are mainly related to cosmetic testing due to the pain and suffering that many animals endure throughout the process. The benefits of testing do not justify the pain and suffering inflicted on these animals (Dunnuck,1993). Unfortunately, many of the animals used in cosmetic testing end up being euthanized or dying before the study is completed. Growing public awareness of the negative impacts of animal-derived components and animal testing in traditional beauty products as well as the negative effects of synthetic materials on health and the environment are the primary drivers behind the rise of the vegan cosmetics market. Further, consumers are increasingly seeking products aligned with their values, leading to the adoption of vegan alternatives. Overall, there is a rising trend in the use of natural materials and additives, particularly in cosmetic products. As a result, marketing strategies are shifting toward natural solutions for cosmetics, linking cosmetic product use to a healthy lifestyle and dietary habits.

However, some consumers are pessimistic about vegan cosmetics given the fact that their preferred brands such as Lancôme, Clinique, and Estee Lauder are not vegan, and the shift from these well-known brands to new cosmetic manufacturers may raise concerns regarding the effectiveness of the products, trust in brands, and finding the perfect match for their beauty needs. As such, it is important to examine the factors that affect consumers' intention to purchase vegan cosmetics considering their perceived benefits/risks for consumers. The extant research on sustainable consumption has rarely focused on vegan products, in general, and vegan cosmetics, in specific, resulting in knowledge gap on factors that could encourage purchase of vegan cosmetic products. While the necessity for sustainable consumption is widely acknowledged by scholars, policymakers, and practitioners worldwide, research in this field is still in its early stages, with many aspects yet to be explored. Furthermore, discussions on this subject are often fragmented.

To fill these gaps, this research focuses on internal and external factors that could affect consumers' perceived benefits of vegan cosmetics and the consequent effect on their purchase intentions by drawing on Stimulus-Organism-Response model (S-R-O; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). According to this model, certain features of an environment elicit cognitive and affective

states in individuals, which in turn, result in behavioral responses from them (Islam & Rahman, 2017). The S-O-R is composed of three components. Stimulus is defined as the factors that affect internal states of the individuals. As recognized by Jacoby, 2008), various internal factors (such as physiological, neurological, and biochemical systems of individuals) and external factors influence consumer behavior. As such, both internal and external factors could stimulate individuals and elicit responses from them. In our research, consumer knowledge of vegan cosmetics (as an internal factor) and social influence (as an external factor) are considered as relevant stimuli. Organism (O) in the SOR refers to the internal processes and structures between external stimuli and the actions, reactions, or responses of the consumer (Bagozzi 1986). In this research, perceived benefits are considered as organism factors. We focus on individual perceived benefits (including emotional benefits and health benefits) and ideological perceived benefits (including animal welfare, and environmental benefits). Response (R) in the SOR model represents the behavioral responses or actions that individuals exhibit due to their internal processes triggered by the stimuli. In the proposed model of this research, intention to purchase vegan cosmetics is included as the response factor.

This research identifies a growing trend among both consumers and producers towards using vegan cosmetics. This trend is attributed to increasing environmental and health awareness. The research contributes to the growing literature on sustainable consumption behavior by focusing on an under-researched yet important topic, vegan cosmetics purchase behavior. The results help identify the factors that affect consumers' perceived benefits of these products and provide more insights on the specific benefits that increase the likelihood of purchasing these products. These findings provide valuable insights that can inform industry practices and strategies for marketing and product development. The insights gained from the research can help marketers of vegan cosmetics to design marketing campaigns that highlight the most relevant factors affecting consumer purchase decisions in their advertising and promotional efforts.

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2024 ACME TEACHING INNOVATION COMPETITION

THE ENGAGED ONLINE LEARNER: A FRAMEWORK AND MODEL FOR INTEGRATION OF CONTENT AND STUDENTS IN THE DELIVERY OF TWO MARKETING COURSES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manuscript is to illustrate a teaching innovation used in a digital marketing program. Through this manuscript, educators and administrators will be introduced to the two course in one approach and its associated implementation framework. Threaded throughout the paper are examples highlighting this framework of interaction, predictability, efficiency and consistency to both the instructor and student. This unique style of teaching is performed in a wholly online, part-time program focused on live engagement and interaction among the community. Specific examples and student feedback are cited to highlight the success of this model for online teaching and learning.

INTRODUCTION

The 2020 pandemic made online education a de facto option for most Institutions of Higher Education (Mandviwalla et al., 2021). Prior to the pandemic, however, online education was a continuing evolution of asynchronous and synchronous classes. Researchers have extensively analyzed the approaches to on-line education and particularly the optimal combination of synchronous vs. asynchronous (Gilpin, 2020). In this manuscript we analyze the results of a novel approach that seeks to leverage the most value out of each modality.

The goal of the two-in-one program was to "provide the skills and understanding to apply digital technologies in today's complex marketing environment. Students will learn how to integrate marketing strategy with the corporate digital infrastructure and maximize the impact on the business strategy." When designing the program, the coordinators decided to implement as much synchronous engagement as possible into the design. A decision was made that rather than provide students with asynchronous content to be digested individually, the program focused on professor-student and student-student engagement and content integration. To enable this engagement and integration, students enrolled in two paired complementary but separate courses each semester. If offered separately and asynchronously, it would be left to the students to make the connection between the courses, so we devised a framework to *connect and integrate* the content in each individual course and thereby generate deeper interaction over content than is typical in most asynchronous online programs. The framework was developed with four overarching concepts: *interaction*, *consistency*, *predictability* and *efficiency*. The framework formed the basis for the delivery including the approach by which each pair of courses was designed and delivered.

Online Education Landscape

According to Babson's annual report focused on online education – "Online Report Card – Tracking Online Education in the United States" – the number of graduate students in Public Institutions enrolled in distance education courses was 38.7% - larger than Private not-for-profit or Private for-profit Institutions. 29.1% of academic leaders reported that faculty accepted the "value and legitimacy" of online education, yet the number of "distance education" students was rising year over year (Seaman et al., 2017). The availability of online education was becoming a marketplace disrupter – enabling students more freedom to choose, free of the constraints of location.

While online classes may have been more widely accessible, it is important to note that some students find it challenging to learn or complete classes in a wholly online environment. Researchers found various demographics that indicated students that might be less successful in an online environment, including race, gender, age, and low GPAs (Figlio et al., 2010). In a study that looked at 13 various characteristics that could likely lead to a student's success in an online classroom, the variable that most closely correlated was the student's overall GPA – meaning that if a student earns a high GPA, they will likely earn a high GPA regardless of the delivery method of the class in which they were enrolled (Wojciechowski & Palmer, 2005).

The above findings suggest the need for a new approach. We chose to focus on *integrated interaction* amongst the students, faculty and content as the tool to generate student's success in the classroom. This approach borrows from the "Community of Inquiry" model (Garrison, et. al., 1999). The Community of Inquiry model posits that a meaningful educational experience contains elements of cognitive, social and teaching presence. This can be translated to the virtual classroom to mean that for the online students to have a successful experience, they should be engaged with their fellow students and faculty through frequent communication, the ability to share and consume content with their fellow students and that the design of the course or program includes strong presentation and organization of the content as well as the facilitation of the content in a meaningful way. Finally, frequent, meaningful interactions between students, peers and faculty tend to learn more effectively – regardless of the course delivery method (Swan, 2001).

Structure

Students are often juggling multiple tasks while attending school, including work, family, and various personal commitments (Dyk, 1987). To ensure that students were able to meet the commitments of a live classroom, the framework includes the concepts of *efficiency* and *predictability*. Efficiency is important for working students as they need to manage the demands on their time and juggle their work, life, and school. However, a program focused on a relatively new exploratory topic designed to change how an organization functions, will require a significant time commitment. Therefore, we also focused on *predictability* so that students can plan for periods of intense study.

Table 1: Efficiencies and Predictability of Two Course in One Model

	Efficiencies	**Predictability**
Professor	• Focus on individual course prep and delivery, individual evaluations • Enhanced through knowledge sharing with paired instructor	• Rhythm and Candance achieved through consistent class meeting times • Reduction of stale or out-of-date teaching methods
Student	• Combined group project, consistent team meetings minimize additional time spent on group work • Cultivated student motivation and enhanced learning opportunities through various assignments and assessments (i.e., timely website discussion posts) that are interwoven	• Consistent Class Meeting Times • Expectations for each Meeting (i.e., Wednesday "Learnathon" and teaching by case method; Sunday "Meet Up" reinforce learnings from previous Wednesday module)

Source: Created by authors

Given the above goals and constraints, we created the *two course in one* model – an innovative structure to deliver efficient, predictable, and integrative instruction on complex topics. The model is implemented into an open-source learning management system called the Community Platform (Mandviwalla, et.al., 2013). Specifically, the model affords the opportunity to connect and integrate content that would normally be delivered in separate courses and the students left to make the connections between the materials.

In this model, students are scheduled for two 3.0 credit courses each semester. Each course has a separate professor and separate requirements; however, the course schedule is designed so that the content delivery is interwoven. Both courses meet on a repeating fixed schedule each term via an online conferencing tool. This predictability enables the students to schedule "life" around the meeting times. In the first-class meeting, both professors join the class and review the syllabus and other administrative details. The professors also provide the introduction of their respective subjects while referencing the interrelation with the other course's content. After the first week, the course schedules are intertwined so that the students meet with one professor for two weeks and then the other professor for two weeks, alternating this pattern until the last class of the semester. Each semester culminates in a final group project presentation which integrates the content across the two courses (see more below). Note that each professor designs their course independently, significantly reducing the coordination and overhead involved compared to other approaches. Next, we discuss a specific example of the *two course in one* model.

THE TWO COURSE IN ONE MODEL

In one term, students enroll in both Digital Brand Management and Business Intelligence. The topics are separate but also related. A marketer must understand how to manage the digital presence of their brand and the ability to analyze and visualize the underlying data is a critical function of that brand management. The professors of each course design their material to highlight the connections across the content while maintaining relevant academic content to their course. In the first class of the semester, both professors and the students gather in the online classroom and the syllabi and course requirements for both courses are provided in tandem. Introductions of professors and students are completed in this meeting, rather than repeating the personal introductions separately. The professors create content for the first class that highlights the interweaving of the content across the semester. The students participate in one In Class Activity which is designed to showcase both the digital brand and the data content.

Figure 1: In Class Activity Example

In-class Exercise for Week 1: Gathering Information

Objective: Form teams to collaboratively analyze why people are taking MIS5101 & MKTG5605 and what they want to get out of this class.

Learning Outcomes

- Practice information gathering, analysis, and working in teams.
- Practice careful listening and contributing to class discussions.
- Synthesize collected information into a cohesive report.

Listen closely to all questions and answers and word your questions precisely.

Step 1: Individual Planning (5 minutes)

- Formulate two or three questions, keeping in mind:
  - What kinds of information do you want to find out?
  - What is the most important thing to know? What is the least important?
  - What are some different ways to phrase questions?
  - What quantitative and qualitative data would be helpful?

Step 2: In randomly assigned breakout groups, ask two of your questions (10 minutes)

- Breakout into teams with 4-5 members each. (Instructor will assign via Breakout Rooms)
- Each person will choose two of their questions and ask the rest of the members for their answer. The person asking the question will answer last.
- Record the answers

Step 3: Decide which questions were the interesting questions (5 minutes)

- Each group will decide the two questions that got the most interesting answers or the most thoughtful responses
- Make a note of question that you might not have asked in your own groups.

Step 4: Summarize your findings (10 minutes total)

- Select a spokesperson from your group who will present a 1-2 minute analysis.
- The analysis should cover the following
  - What kinds of questions elicited the most useful information?
  - What data could be missing from your analysis? Why?
  - Where else would you like to get that data from to do a more thorough analysis?

Step 5: Groups Present (15 minutes)

Each spokesperson will present their group's analysis.

Source: Created by authors

Following the first class, students alternate subjects for the duration of the semester. In the marketing class, students are challenged to dive deep into building a company's brand in a digital marketplace, while in the data analytics class, students focus on how to build key performance indicators and visualize data. In a traditional model, it would be left to the students to connect the components of brand and data outside of the classroom, however the interweaving of the content through case studies and course deliverables highlights the deep correlation between marketing and data analysis.

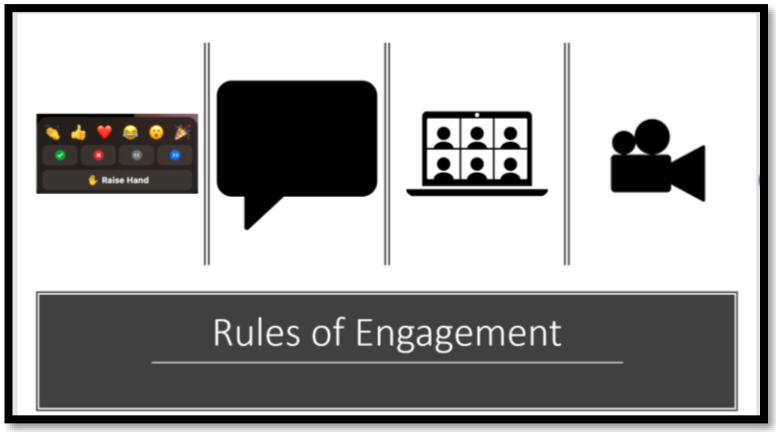
Table 2: Schedule of Courses

6					
7	**#**	**Session**	**Day**	**Date**	**Course**
8	1	Learnathon	W	12-Jan	Shared
9		Meetup	S	16-Jan	Shared
10	2	Learnathon	W	19-Jan	MIS5101
11		Meetup	S	23-Jan	MIS5101
12	3	Learnathon	W	26-Jan	MIS5101
13		Meetup	S	30-Jan	MIS5101
14	4	Learnathon	W	2-Feb	MKTG5605
15		Meetup	S	6-Feb	MKTG5605
16	5	Learnathon	W	9-Feb	MKTG5605
17		Meetup	S	13-Feb	MKTG5605
18	6	Learnathon	W	16-Feb	MIS5101
19		Meetup	S	20-Feb	MIS5101
20	7	Learnathon	W	23-Feb	MIS5101
21		Meetup	S	27-Feb	MIS5101
22	8	Learnathon	W	2-Mar	
23		Meetup	S	6-Mar	
24	9	Learnathon	W	9-Mar	MKTG5605
25		Meetup	S	13-Mar	MKTG5605
26	10	Learnathon	W	16-Mar	MKTG5605
27		Meetup	S	20-Mar	MKTG5605
28	11	Learnathon	W	23-Mar	Team Meetings
29		Meetup	S	27-Mar	Team Meetings
30	12	Learnathon	W	30-Mar	MIS5101
31		Meetup	S	3-Apr	MIS5101
32	13	Learnathon	W	6-Apr	MKTG5605
33		Meetup	S	10-Apr	MKTG5605
34	14	Learnathon	W	13-Apr	Final Shared

Creating Opportunities for Engagement

By creating an active learning environment, the instructors naturally teach with an "engagement-first strategy," meaning that they continually look for ways to prevent feelings of frustration or isolation and keep the students motivated. At the start of each semester, as part of the model, we outline the "Rules of Engagement" for the class. Virtual "live" classrooms have provided unique opportunities for engagement within the student cohort and with industry executives. Without the limitations of location, guest speakers can join the classroom from wherever they are located. To that end, the two course in one model is able to add relevant guest lectures from industry to their classes in an environment where everyone is joining from a separate location – not just the guest speaker over a large screen in a lecture hall. The discussion continues live and with the chat function as the students communicate with the speaker and each other, creating high levels of engagement.

Figure 2: Rules of Engagement



Source: Created by authors

In Class Activities

The challenges of maintaining engagement over a three-hour virtual session is even less likely to hold the students' full attention when considering the competition of other activities that student can be simultaneously performing on their computers or by shutting down their cameras. The belief is that with cameras on, students will feel more connected with the professor and each other as the visual matched with the vocal leaves a deeper impression. As mentioned above, one of the cornerstone ideas in the *two course in one* model is predictability. When students can predict how the class is structured, they can focus on each activity and how it will feed into the overall agenda of the evening. A typical agenda consists of the following (1) Intro/Schedule Review; (2) Main topic lecture & discussion; (3) In class activity focused on the main topic; (4) case study discussion and (5) closing lecture or Q&A.

The In Class Activity (ICA) is designed to facilitate engagement amongst the students. The ICA is structured to allow the students to engage with the main content and apply their new knowledge in a concrete way. Throughout the course of the semester, students have the opportunity to interact with their classmates through these ICAs and develop deeper relationships in a small group setting. The use of the In Class Activity enables both integration of the material and efficiency for the students. The students engage in the content immediately, since the activity is grounded in the content from the main lecture.

Online Certifications & Tangible Skills

Integration of hands on, directly applicable skills is another component to this model. Students should complete the program with tangible, market-based skills that can be immediately added to their resume. This goal is achieved not only through the interweaving of the course content and hands on in class activities, but also through a variety of company sponsored certifications. Not only do these certifications boost a student's resume but they also efficiently tie together the digital marketing skillsets that the program sets out to achieve. Certifications – whether from marketing learning centers or Google Analytics –are a great addition to keep the course updated and focused on industry trends. The on-demand training provided is available anytime so students can utilize the tools at a convenient time. As the professors incorporate the training and certifications into the syllabus, students can predict where and when will be the most effective time to complete. Upon completion of their certificates, students post their accomplishments on LinkedIn, generally highlighting the certification and their key takeaways. Commonly, they are cheered on by their fellow students and professors – adding another layer of engagement and connection amongst the cohort.

The Final Group Project

Each semester culminates in a final group project that interweaves the learning goals of both courses delivered. Each professor designs their requirements for the project and then correlates them with the deliverables of the paired class. The teams are randomly assigned, and the students are encouraged to work with their teams to select a topic that will spark an interest to each member of the group. The highest graded projects will include an interweaving of the material from both courses – not simply individual chunks of answers. The coordination between the instructors is efficient – both focusing on their learning goals and then providing the students the freedom to achieve those goals as they can. As there is only one final group project across both classes, the focus on the efficiency of the *two course in one model* is highlighted as students operate with just one group across the entire semester, rather than the need to have multiple teams across the courses.

Course Management

While the courses are largely developed independently, the overarching goal again is to provide predictability and efficiency for the students. For that reason, students are provided one consolidated "Master Calendar" for the semester. The Master Calendar enables students the ability to see the entire semester's worth of deliverables at a glance, in a week-by-week layout. As today's students are managing multiple tasks – both professional and personal – this enables the ability to concisely plan the semester. Due dates are coordinated by the professors so that students can develop a plan for submission at the start of the semester with eyes on deliverables for both classes in tandem. This predictability gives many students the comfort of knowing how exactly they can plan their time so that they may have ample time to complete the assignments.

Student Feedback and Evaluation

After the implementation of the *two course in one* model, the participating students were surveyed over multiple semesters. Students were asked to rate multiple aspects of the *two course in one model* and how they perceived its efficacy on a Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree scale. 84% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that scheduling the two courses in blocks was an effective and more efficient way of learning than taking two courses separately. 73% of students indicated they learned more from taking two courses together, rather than if they had taken the courses independently. In the same survey, students are also asked an open-ended question – "List three things that are working well." Respondents consistently reflect and remark positively on the *two course in one* model, one student noting: "The two course in one model is highly efficient and a great way to learn for motivated students." Other anecdotal feedback from students indicates that they truly valued "a predictable and consistent schedule followed by the program" and "alternating classes that tie into each other throughout the course and culminating in a group project was very successful."

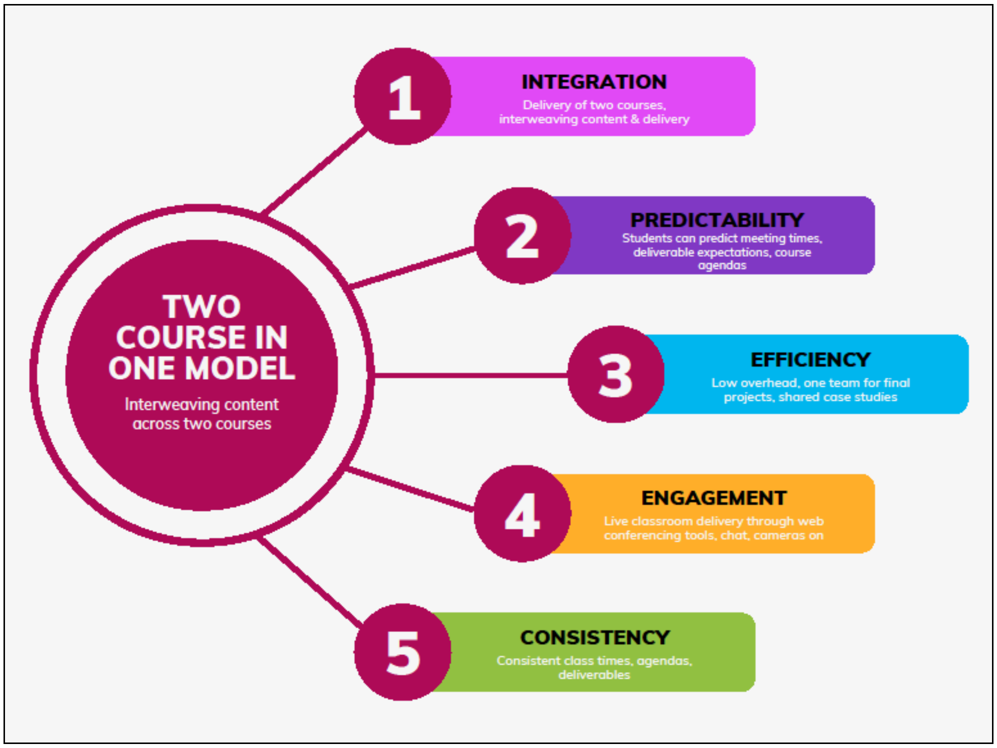
Figure 3: Student Satisfaction Survey Data

Source: Created by authors

Conclusion

The connection between the faculty and students in the *two course in one* model, can perhaps be most clearly seen in results, where efficiency and predictability are both achieved by student and educator. Well-organized courses encourage student motivation, performance, and persistence. And a *two course in one* model is even more refined in that the instructors of both courses design their respective courses with an understanding of their colleague's learning goals. This leads to deeper student motivation and enhanced opportunities for more effective learning. Through the *two course in one* model, and our framework of interaction, efficiency, consistency, and predictability the learning goals of each course align with activities and assessments. It is through this approach that students in courses develop strong conceptual awareness, learn to synthesize ideas, and begin formulating their own knowledge. The connection between the materials covered in courses is not thinly referred to, but rather through the use of cases, in class activities and final group projects, intertwined and highlighted from each angle.

Figure 4: Highlights of the 2 course in one model



Source: Created by authors

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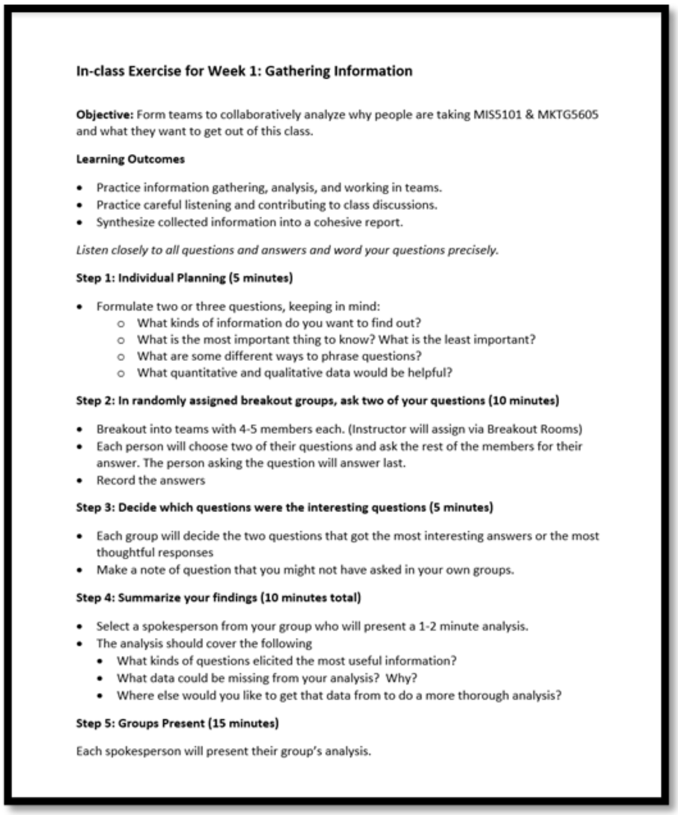
APPENDIX

Exhibit 1: In Class Activity Example



In-class Exercise for Week 1: Gathering Information

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Learning Outcomes

- Practice information gathering, analysis, and working in teams.
- Practice careful listening and contributing to class discussions.
- Synthesize collected information into a cohesive report.

Listen closely to all questions and answers and word your questions precisely.

Step 1: Individual Planning (5 minutes)

- Formulate two or three questions, keeping in mind:
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Step 2: In randomly assigned breakout groups, ask two of your questions (10 minutes)

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Step 4: Summarize your findings (10 minutes total)

- Select a spokesperson from your group who will present a 1-2 minute analysis.
- The analysis should cover the following
  - What kinds of questions elicited the most useful information?
  - What data could be missing from your analysis? Why?
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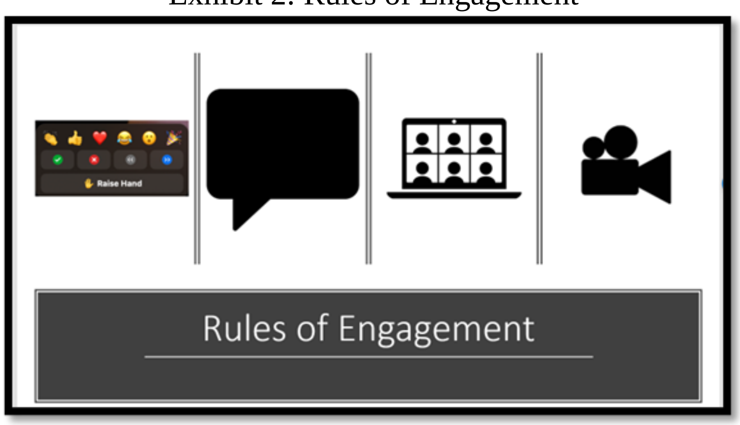
Step 5: Groups Present (15 minutes)

Each spokesperson will present their group's analysis.

Source: Created by authors

Exhibit 2: Rules of Engagement



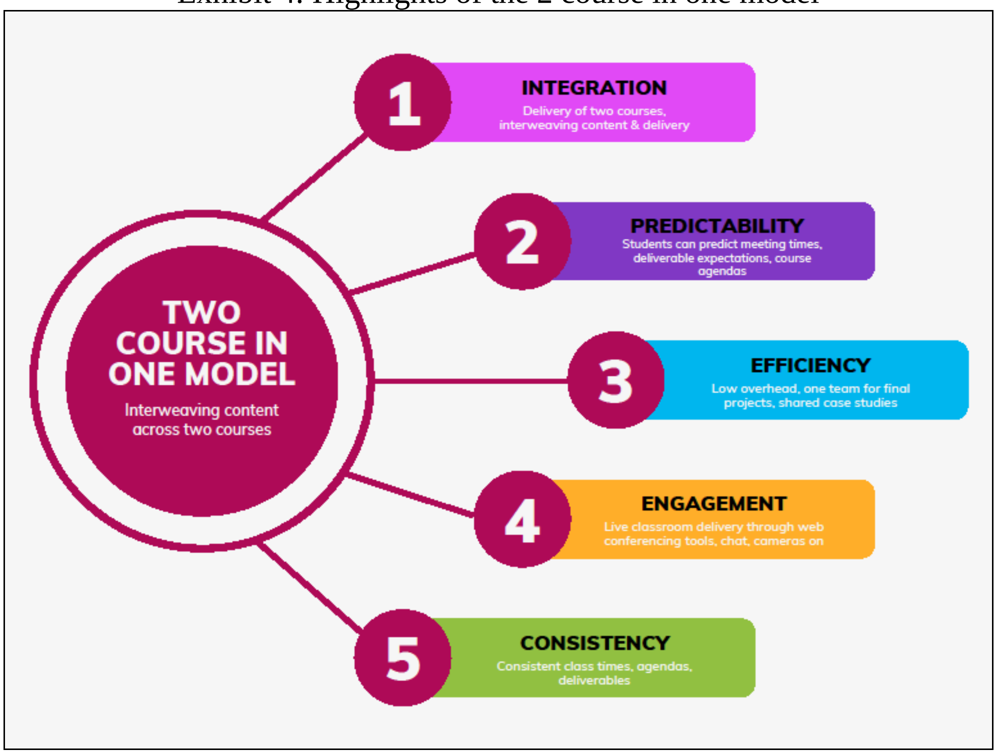
Source: Created by authors

Exhibit 3: Efficiencies and Predictability of Two Course in One Model

	Efficiencies	Predictability
Professor	• Focus on individual course prep and delivery, individual evaluations • Enhanced through knowledge sharing with paired instructor	• Rhythm and Candance achieved through consistent class meeting times • Reduction of stale or out-of-date teaching methods
Student	• Combined group project, consistent team meetings minimize additional time spent on group work • Cultivated student motivation and enhanced learning opportunities through various assignments and assessments (i.e., timely website discussion posts) that are interwoven	• Consistent Class Meeting Times • Expectations for each Meeting (i.e., Wednesday “Learnathon” and teaching by case method; Sunday “Meet Up” reinforce learnings from previous Wednesday module)

Source: Created by authors

Exhibit 4: Highlights of the 2 course in one model



Source: Created by authors

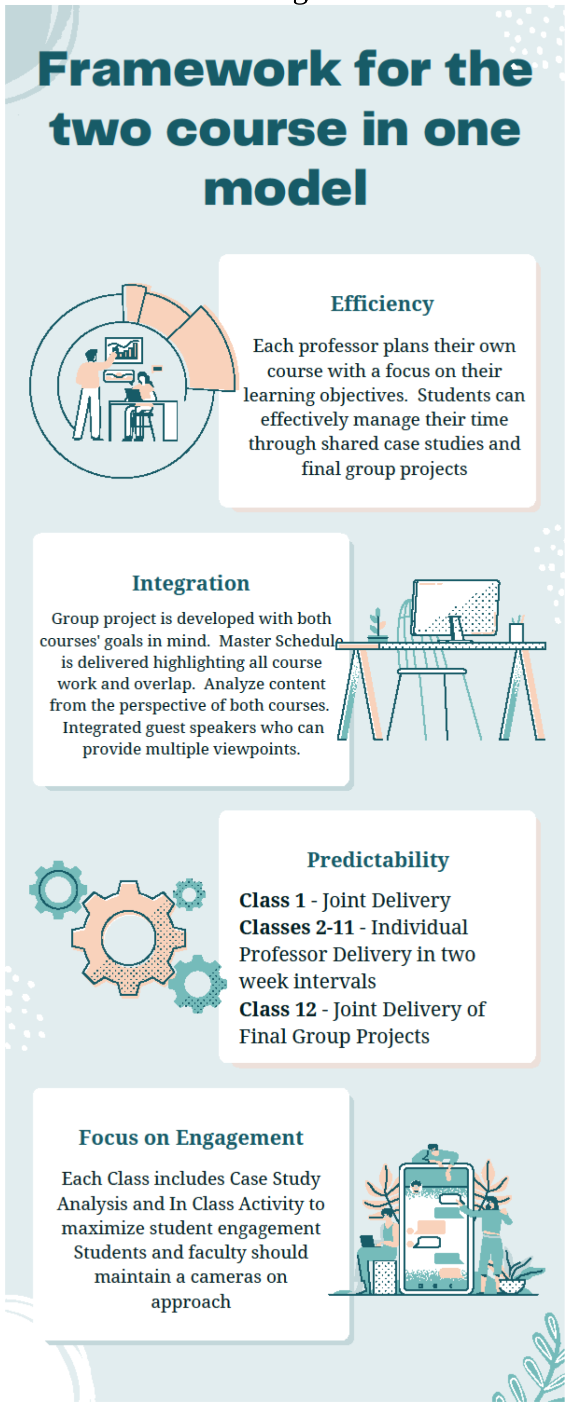
Exhibit 5: Student Satisfaction Survey Data

Source: Created by authors

Exhibit 6: Schedule of Courses

6					
7	#	Session	Day	Date	Course
8	1	Learnathon	W	12-Jan	Shared
9		Meetup	S	16-Jan	Shared
10	2	Learnathon	W	19-Jan	MIS5101
11		Meetup	S	23-Jan	MIS5101
12	3	Learnathon	W	26-Jan	MIS5101
13		Meetup	S	30-Jan	MIS5101
14	4	Learnathon	W	2-Feb	MKTG5605
15		Meetup	S	6-Feb	MKTG5605
16	5	Learnathon	W	9-Feb	MKTG5605
17		Meetup	S	13-Feb	MKTG5605
18	6	Learnathon	W	16-Feb	MIS5101
19		Meetup	S	20-Feb	MIS5101
20	7	Learnathon	W	23-Feb	MIS5101
21		Meetup	S	27-Feb	MIS5101
22	8	Learnathon	W	2-Mar	
23		Meetup	S	6-Mar	
24	9	Learnathon	W	9-Mar	MKTG5605
25		Meetup	S	13-Mar	MKTG5605
26	10	Learnathon	W	16-Mar	MKTG5605
27		Meetup	S	20-Mar	MKTG5605
28	11	Learnathon	W	23-Mar	Team Meetings
29		Meetup	S	27-Mar	Team Meetings
30	12	Learnathon	W	30-Mar	MIS5101
31		Meetup	S	3-Apr	MIS5101
32	13	Learnathon	W	6-Apr	MKTG5605
33		Meetup	S	10-Apr	MKTG5605
34	14	Learnathon	W	13-Apr	Final Shared

Exhibit 7: Framework for Creating the Two Course in One Model



Source: Created by authors

MARKETING RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS

INNOVATIVE MARKETING TECHNIQUES IN THE IT INDUSTRY: CHATGPT INTEGRATION WITH PLUGINS, API, AND PROMPT ENGINEERING

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the transformative impact of AI integration in modern marketing strategies, particularly within the IT industry. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study demonstrates how AI-driven solutions streamline operations, reduce workloads, and enhance productivity. In the IT sector, AI is harnessed for various applications including chatbots, email marketing, SEO, website optimization and supply chain management for marketing teams. ChatGPT integration, coupled with plugins, demonstrates remarkable potential in optimizing marketing strategies. This paper also sheds light on future research prospects, encouraging further exploration of emerging chatbot technologies and comparative analyses to continue shaping the landscape of AI in IT marketing.

Keywords: AI Integration, API Interaction, ChatGPT, Cost Efficiency, Customer Database Analytics, IT Industry, Modern Marketing Strategies, Prompts, Plugins, Sentiment Analysis, SEO Optimization, Supply Chain Management.

INTRODUCTION

Modern marketing strategies, developed with the help of AI, are replacing traditional marketing approaches due to the rapid pace of transition. Synergy between information technology (IT) and marketing has become very evident. The United States, a global hub for technological innovation and digital marketing, stands at the forefront of this transformative journey. Many industries rely on IT as a cornerstone of their operations, and AI represents the future of the IT field. In the of the fourth industrial revolution, AI is revolutionizing the marketing strategies that industries employ to engage with their audiences (Olson & Levy, 2018). Every industry has Information Technology (IT) sector in it and the concept of AI are mostly employed in the industries that rely on IT. The efficiency of the work done by the humans with the integration of the AI has been reduced resulting in the reduction in the workload on the IT industry. AI in marketing simplifies the process of analysing immense amounts of internet data and utilizing it to aid businesses in succeeding. It provides insights on when to post, how to maximize post visibility, and ways to gain more attention for posts. The use of AI makes the work of employees significantly easier, affording them opportunities for innovative thinking with the time saved (Bojic et al., 2019).

The market of AI is forecasted to touch 190 billion dollars by the end of 2025. By 2021 technologies developing with AI are predicted to reach 57.6 billion dollars, with AI technology being integrated into 75% of business applications. By 2030, it is expected AI will contribute to a 14.5% increase in the GDP of the United States (Simov, 1990). 83% of businesses have recognized that the strategies made by the AI are far better than the ones used before. 31 % of the IT Experts and marketing experts are willing to invest in AI in upcoming months. 61% of the people doing business described AI as the future of technology. 95% of the managers were trained in the use of big data and have now trusted AI and started the use of it (Simov, 1990). The marketing team of IT businesses primarily leverage AI for selling their services or products by utilizing AI chatbots, email marketing, SEO strategies, and improving the visual appeal of their websites to engage their target audience more effectively.

This paper addresses how the integration of AI tools such as ChatGPT can enable the marketing teams of IT companies to maximize benefits and enhance their strategies for achieving optimal results. The study includes sentimental analysis, data analytics of customer database, website creation and client interaction etc. through prompts, plugins, and API interaction.

LITERATURE RIVIEW

Joseph Weizenbaum introduced ELIZA in the 1960s, the first chatbot capable of engaging in text-based conversations with humans (Weizenbaum, 1966). During the mid-1990s Dr. Richard Wallace developed ALICE (Tharammal et al., 2022). ALICE utilized sophisticated natural language processing methods and a vast collection of pre-written responses to participate in diverse conversations across various subjects. Both ELIZA and ALICE were enabled to have their presence in the market for the long term due to limited data set and inadequate natural language processing models. In the mid-2000s, British AI scientist Rollo Carpenter created Cleverbot, an AI chatbot that significantly advanced chatbot technology by implementing artificial neural networks, leading to the generation of more natural and varied responses (Ahmad et al., 2018). In June 2020, the team of researchers and engineers at OpenAI developed an AI model known as ChatGPT representing a milestone in the improvement of humancomputer interaction and accessibility to information (Fraiwan & Khasawneh, 2023). The evolution of AI is clearly visible by the development of all these chat bots.

The applications of AI extend to numerous domains, including marketing within the IT sector, where it has significantly enhanced customer experience which is a key factor in marketing. It enables businesses to redirect their attention to the work that requires human intervention while facilitating quick and easy interactions with clients (Liu et al., 2019). Collecting user data is within the capacity of chatbot, which can be employed to enhance marketing strategies, resulting in a mutually beneficial outcome for both clients and companies (Doguc, 2023). AI can be utilized to train chatbots, enabling them to formulate effective marketing strategies with higher possibility of success in the marketing outcomes.

Table 1: Performance (%) of various AI Bots

	ChatGPT	Bing Chat	Bard
2019	76	92	82
2020	86	96	94
2021	76	86	82
2022	80	94	86
2023	78	94	86
AVG.	79.2	92.4	86

Traditional marketing can be quite time-consuming and often places significant pressure on employees (Doguc, 2023). By implementing AI into marketing strategy, companies can identify prospective clients. It enables marketers to monitor individuals with a high likelihood of unsubscribing from a service and gathers data from these individuals, allowing marketers to tailor their marketing strategies accordingly (Saura et al., 2021).

Several types of AI bots such as Google Bard and Microsoft Bing chat have been evaluated and their performance percentages are presented in Table 1. Additionally, these performance percentages have been visually represented in graphical form, as depicted in Figure 1 (Dao, 2023). This study is just limited to ChatGPT and its specific application.

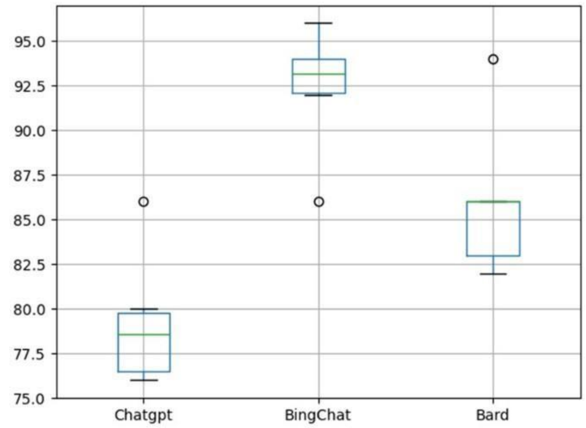


Figure 1: Graphical representation of Performance (%) of various AI Bots

METHODOLOGY

ChatGPT is brought to life through a complex network of neural connections. Its architecture has multi-layered arrangement of transformers engineered to navigate the complexities of sequential data. ChatGPT is adept at generating text that maintains consistency and natural language flow, resulting in human-like output.

ChatGPT's behavior can be categorized into a few steps. Initially, prompt is inputted by the user in the system. The prompt is then processed by the model using its knowledge to create connections and language patterns, leading to generation of the response. This response is provided back to available users to pose additional questions or get engaged in conversation. Notably, this methodology is refined through comprehensive training driven by Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback, which characterizes the RLHF Model.

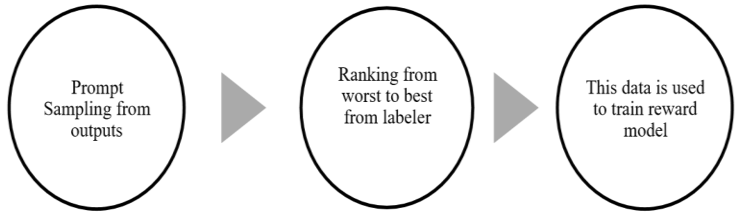
- Supervised Fine-Tuning Model: It is refined through a process of supervised finetuning, utilizing accumulated demonstration data to enhance its performance.

- Reward Model: It allocates points to appraise the attractiveness of the Supervised FineTuning model’s output for users.

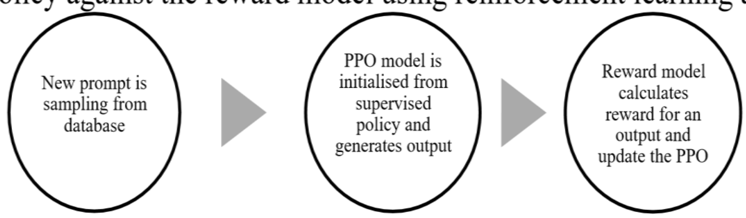
- Supervised Fine-Tuning Model via Proximal Policy Optimization: Learning Reinforcement is employed to improve the Supervised Fine-Tuning Model, enabling it to enhance the Reward Model (Kalla & Smith, 2023).

Step 1: Collection of Demonstrated data and trained supervised learning.

Step 2: Collect comparison data and train a reward model.



Step 3: Optimize a policy against the reward model using reinforcement learning algorithm.



Prompt Engineering

In artificial intelligence (AI), prompt engineering is a strategy used to refine and customize language models to achieve the intended outcome for specific activities. Prompting can have a considerable impact on the messages generated as their development depends on the phrases (Liu et al., 2021).

Optimization of Marketing through effective usage of Prompts:

1.Website Enhancement:

For website development in the IT firms:
Code Generation Revolution: AI simplifies code creation, tasks that once took developers days are now completed in seconds, freeing up valuable time for innovation.
Generation of Codes: AI has made it quite easy to generate the codes. The program which used to take 2 days for the developer is written by AI in fraction of seconds. By this the time of the developers have saved and they can think of some innovations.

Effortless Debugging: AI aids in code debugging by pinpointing errors and providing solutions for it.

Streamlined Software Testing: AI's ability to develop test cases and data significantly makes testing more efficient and effective, ensuring robust software quality.

Empowering NPL: AI supports user chatbot interaction, generation of interface for user and helps in analyzing the requirements of the user.
Effortless Documentation Creation: AI generates software documentation from NL descriptions and hence makes rapidly generated efficient documents.

Enhancing Collaboration: AI creates teamwork among the developers by offering rapid feedback and proving answers for every query (Fraiwan & Khasawneh, 2023).

2. Marketing in the Digital Era:

ChatGPT's advancing its utility in marketing by generating precise content for social media, crafts in-depth reviews, offers round-the-clock customer support, and optimizes marketing campaigns. The detailed marketing applications of ChatGPT are as follows:

Content Creation: ChatGPT is a versatile AI tool that significantly enhances marketing strategies. It excels in generating a wide range of content, from social media posts, product descriptions etc. Furthermore, ChatGPT supports customer engagement by automating responses and interactions, serving as the intelligence behind chatbots. In addition to content, ChatGPT assists in campaign optimization, A/B testing, and data analytics to refine marketing strategies. It can even create branding elements like taglines and visuals. Overall, ChatGPT boosts marketing efficiency, ensures 24/7 customer support, and delivers multilingual assistance, making it an invaluable asset for modern marketing efforts.

Customer Services: ChatGPT revolutionizes customer support by offering personalized assistance. It excels in answering customer queries about products and services promptly and accurately. By analyzing customer data, it can provide tailored recommendations that align with individual preferences, enhancing the overall customer experience. Moreover, ChatGPT aids in efficiently resolving customer issues and complaints, ensuring customer satisfaction. Its 24/7 availability and multilingual capabilities further contribute to superior customer support, establishing it as an asset for businesses looking to deliver exceptional service.

Generation of Leads: ChatGPT examines customer data to create detailed natural language descriptions of potential customers, enabling businesses to target their audience effectively. Furthermore, ChatGPT assists in lead qualification by scrutinizing customer responses and identifying promising leads based on specific criteria. This dynamic capability streamlines the lead generation process, helping businesses connect with the most promising prospects and optimize their sales efforts.

3. Supply chain management:

Supply chain management encompasses various applications for ChatGPT, such as demand analysis, route optimization, and risk assessment. ChatGPT can address these challenges and provide solutions. For instance, it can formulate a Set Covering Problem (SCP) and a route optimization problem. The SCP involves selecting the minimum number of locations from a larger set of subsets to fulfill all demand, and it can be mathematically represented as a mixedinteger linear program. Objective function:

$$\text{Min } Z\ \Sigma j\ cjxj \quad \text{s.t.}$$

$$\Sigma^{\in} jJ\ aijxj \geq 1,\ \overset{\in}{I}\ I\ x_j\ 0,$$

$$1,$$

$$\in j\ J \quad \in$$

where,

J is the set of locations.

C_j is the cost (or weight) of selecting location j.

x_j is a binary decision variable that takes value 1 if location j is selected, and 0 otherwise.

I is the set of customers. a_{ij} is a binary value that indicates whether customer i is in the coverage of location j (Cribben & Zeinali, 2023).

Illustrations for Prompt engineering:

For content Creation:

1.Find Keywords for Future or Existing Content

a. Prompt: Make a list of 50 keywords in the *YourTopicHere* niche.
b. Prompt: What are the top keywords for the topic of *YourTopicHere.*
c. Prompt: What is SEO friendly *YourTopicHere* Keywords.

2. Create Outlines for Content

a. Prompt: Write an outline for a guide to *YourTopicHere*.
b. Prompt: What are the10 places to visit in Paris (this is just an example of how to ask for a specific outline).
c. Prompt: Write an outline for an article explaining *YourTopicHere.*

3. Write Entire Articles and Blog Posts

a. Prompt: Write a 1,000-word article based on this outline (use this prompt after a previous prompt for an outline).
b. Prompt: Write a 500–750-word article on the topic of *YourTopicHere.*

4. Generate Title Ideas

a. Prompt: Write 5 catchy subject lines for this article (use this prompt after a previous prompt for a written article).

b. Prompt: Write 5 keyword friendly and catchy titles for a blog post about *YourTopicHere.*

For Marketing:

- Content calendar for your marketing campaign

Ask follow-up questions until you have all the information to create the perfect content calendar.

- Define your target audience

Help to identify my target audience. Ask follow-up questions until you have all the information you need to create a buyer persona and target audience for my business.

- Social Media Posts

Write a post about [TOPIC] to be posted on [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM]. Remember to optimize the post for buyer persona. • Writing blogs and articles + SEO

Pretend to be a poet. Write a poem for your [YOUR NICHE] book and the title will be [TOPIC]. This post should be helpful for buyer persona. Poem should have a total of [Number of Words] words. Poem should have [Number of Metaphors} metaphors in it and should make the reader think of their childhood.

- Email Marketing-Email Sequence

Write [NUMBER OF EMAILS] emails for an email marketing campaign about [TOPIC].

Remember to optimize it for buyer persona.

- Sales Page

Write a list including all the copywriting frameworks that you can use while writing copy Write a sales page optimized for my buyer persona, where I will sell [PRODUCT OR SERVICE]. Use the copywriting framework [ADD THE FRAMEWORK HERE]

- Facebook Page

Write a Facebook ad to sell my [PRODUCT OR SERVICE] to buyer persona. Also provide the Ideal target audience, placement, budget, and duration.

- Google Ads

Write a Google search Ad optimized for buyer persona, selling [PRODUCT OR SERVICE]. Include headline, description, display URL, Final URL, keywords, and Ad extensions.

- YouTube Videos

Tags: Write 20 tags for my YouTube video about [YOUR CURRENT TITLE] separated by comma.

Description: Write an optimized description for this YouTube video using the main keywords and tags. Write 10 other variations for this YouTube video title [YOUR CURRENT TITLE]

- Branding & E-commerce

Create names for [BUSINESS TYPE] and [TARGET AUDIENCE]. Ask follow-up questions if necessary until you get all the information you need to create the best name for my business.

Create product names for [BUSINESS TYPE] and [TARGET AUDIENCE]. Ask follow-up questions if necessary until you get all the information you need to create the best name for my business.

Write taglines and slogans for [BUSINESS TYPE].

Write 3 descriptions for the product [YOUR PRODUCT] Write a FAQ for product [YOUR

PRODUCT].

For Marketing Funnel:

- Identifying your buyer persona

Help me to identify my target audience. Ask follow-up questions until you have all the information you need to create a buyer persona and target audience for my business.

- Creating a lead magnet

Create a list of lead magnets I can create for this buyer persona.

- Creating a landing page

Write a landing page copy optimized for my buyer persona, where I will sell [PRODUCT OR SERVICE]. Use the copywriting framework [ADD THE FRAMEWORK HERE]. Include headline, subhead line, and all the elements of an optimized copy.

Write a post about [TOPIC] to be posted on [SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM]. Remember to optimize the post for my buyer persona. Add a call to action at the end driving traffic to my landing page.

- Email Sequence for Funnel

Write [NUMBER OF EMAILS] emails for an email marketing campaign about [TOPIC]. Remember to optimize it for my buyer persona.

Plugins

Pre-trained LLMs on their own are limited to tasks that require interaction with external services. For example, LLMs cannot create a travel itinerary without using data about active flight schedules and cannot book tickets without reaching out to travel agencies.

To tackle these limitations, platform vendors, such as OpenAI, have begun to extend LLMs by integrating them with third-party plugins (Fraiwan & Khasawneh, 2023). Third-party plugins expose API endpoints to LLM platforms so that the LLMs can access uptodate and/or restricted data (e.g., data beyond the training samples) and interact with online third-party services (i.e., to act on recommendations made in the emitted output).

Plugin architecture & interaction workflow:

LLM platform plugins (in at least one, currently existing design) consist of a manifest and an API specification, both of which are defined through natural language descriptions.

API specification

The API specification includes the API server endpoint, API functionality endpoints along with their description, expected API data with its type and description, and expected API response type. Once a user enables a plugin, its description for model and endpoints (specified under paths) are fed to the LLM to build the context that is necessary for interpreting and resolving the user prompt with the help of the plugin. Once a user initiates a prompt, the LLM first determines if addressing the prompt requires the use of the installed plugin. Then the LLM platform makes a call to the relevant plugin API endpoint, which is determined through the endpoint path.

The LLM may send additional user data that is not part of the user prompt, such as the country and state, with the plugin API request. After the LLM makes the API call, the plugin executes its functionality on its own server and returns the response. The LLM then interprets the response returned from the API, and then formats it to show it to the user. Note that the LLM platform mediates all interactions with the plugin; users and plugins do not directly interact, except for a few instances, e.g., logging in on plugin service.

First, plugin developers are responsible for

1.	Developing and updating plugins.
2.	Hosting the plugin on their own servers.
3.	Supporting authentication of platform (e.g., endpoints restricted to traffic from the LLM platform).
4.	Supporting authentication of users to the plugin's entity.
5.	Processing data and fulfilling commands provided by the LLM platform.

LLM is responsible for:

1.	Reviewing plugins and making them available on the plugin store.
2.	Providing user authentication interfaces.
3.	Initiating plugins based on user prompts.
4..	Facilitating user plugin interaction.

Finally, the user is responsible for:

1.	Installing and removing plugins.
2.	Managing their accounts.
3.	Issuing prompts to interact with plugins.

There is alignment of risk in the Plugins it is easy to hack.

Applications of the Plugins (OpenAI):

Content Marketing Plugins in Chat GPT:

Diagram	Create visual representations, such as charts and graphs, to convey data insights effectively to audience.

Image Editor	Perform basic image modifications using this plugin.
Paraphraser	Reword the content correctly.
Photorealistic	Create superior prompts for the development of photos during the middle phase of the journey.
Speedy Marketing	Plugin for crafting content tailored to e-commerce and other business needs.
Show notes	Develop essential podcast highlights.
Video Summary	Create synopses and highlights for YouTube video content.

ChatGPT Plugins for SEO:

Brame work:	Identify keywords, create content briefs, perform SEO, and provides valuable SEO data.
Chat Spot	Access marketing insights, website domain details, and receive keyword feedback from HubSpot.
Keyword Explorer	Explore a wide range of related keywords to enhance your content optimization efforts.
SEO	Analyse on-page SEO by submitting a URL and keyword for evaluation.
SEO App	An assistant for improving SEO in content marketing.
SEO Assistant	Generate keywords to enhance content optimization.
Sembot	Receive detailed reports on keywords, CPCs, domain visibility, and SEO performance to boost your online presence and drive website visitors.
Scraper	Effortlessly extract information from websites by inputting their URLs.

Plugins for Website Creation Plugins in ChatGPT:

B12 AI Website	Quickly generate a new website with the assistance of AI
Domains Bot	Find the perfect domain name for your online presence
Website Performance	Optimize the website performances

CONCLUSION

ChatGPT has made a significant impact on the marketing landscape within the IT industry. It has unveiled new possibilities for enhancing marketing effectiveness, precision, and innovation.

It is evident that integrating ChatGPT with specific plugins tailored for various use cases can yield substantial time and cost efficiencies for IT firms. In today's marketing landscape for IT enterprises, there is a clear distinction from non-IT sectors. This encompasses customer sentiment analysis using machine learning models, the creation of SEO-optimized websites to bolster online presence, supply chain management and the utilization of CRM systems enhanced by ChatGPT's intelligence. AI bots, effectively serving as unpaid employees, rapidly address client queries within seconds by processing specific prompts. This boosts customer support efficiency and responsiveness.

In terms of future research prospects, one can explore other chatbots such as Google Bard and Microsoft Bing Chat, conduct comparative analyses, optimize costs, and assess feasibility using ISM modeling. These endeavors continue to shape the evolving landscape of AI in marketing for IT industries.

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